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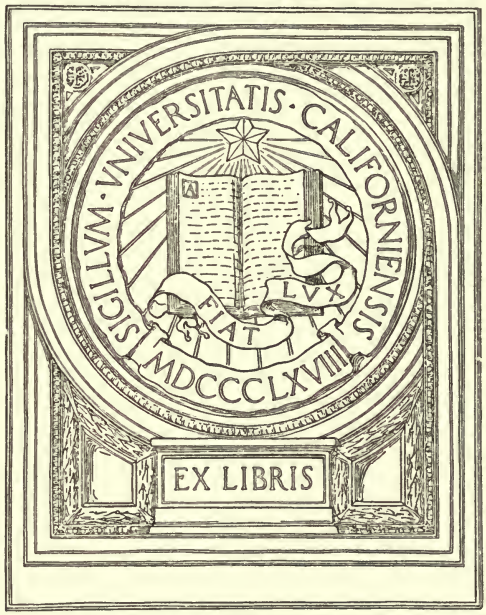
WOODMYTH & FABLE

ERNEST THOMPSON SETON

GIFT OF
A. F. Morrison



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UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

PUBLISHED by THE CENTURY CO. NEW YORK 1905

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Published April, 1905

First
Impression
April
15,
1905

GIFT OF
A. F. Morrison

THE DE VINNE PRESS

M95642

In this Book the designs for cover,
title-page, and general
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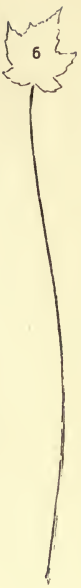
Grace Gallatin Seton



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FOREWORD

Most boys gather in the woods pretty and odd bits of moss, fungus, and other treasures that have no price. They bring them home and store them in that universal receptacle, the Tackle-box. Some boys, like myself, never outgrow the habit. Oneday a friend observed that my Tackle-box was full and suggested that a selection be given to the public.

Most of this booty I gathered in the woods myself, but an Indian gave me fragments of "The Recipe" and "Gitch-e O-kok-o-hoo," and a Chinaman told me where to find "The Frog in the Well."

THE COLLECTOR OF LIES.

A VENERABLE old man with a pen behind his ear, and ink on his fingers, went up the main street of Humantown, calling out as he went:

"Lies! Any old lies to-day? Biscuits for lies to-day!"

He had a basket of sweet wafers, or biscuits, on one arm, and they were shaped like a human ear. These he was exchanging for the lies, that were very abundant in this town.

Most of the inhabitants freely gave them to the man; some even pressed them on him: but a few had to be repaid with at least a wafer. Very soon the old man's bag was full.

It was a new thing to collect lies, and

many jokes were bandied at the expense of the old man and his odd occupation. The strange merchant left the main street, and a little child had the curiosity to follow him. The venerable one turned aside through a door into a beautiful garden in the very heart of the town and yet quite unknown. He closed the door, but the child peeped through the keyhole, and saw the old man take the bag of lies and give it a good shake. There was a commotion and rattling inside for a time, and the mass seemed to be smaller.

"Ah, hear them eating each other up!" chuckled the old man.

Another shake was followed by more commotion and another shrinkage. The collector's face beamed.

A few more shakes, and the bag seemed actually empty; but the old man opened

it carefully, and there in the far corner was a pinch of pure gold.

The child reported all these things, and the next time they saw the old man, the people demanded who he was. He answered:

"*I am the Historian.*"

THE LAND-CRAB

"I AM absolutely unchangeable. Nothing can turn me aside one hair's-breadth from my purpose," said the little Land-crab, as he left his winter quarters in the hills and began his regular spring journey to the Sea. But during the winter a line of telegraph poles had been placed along his track. The Land-crab came to the first pole. He would not turn aside one inch. He spent all day climbing up the side of the pole, and all the next day climbing down the other side, then on till he came to the next pole, where he had another frightful climb up and over and down again. Thus he went on day after day, and when the summer was gone they found the body of the poor

little Land-crab dead at the bottom of one of the poles only half-way to the Sea, which he might have reached easily in half a day had he been contented to deviate six inches from his usual line of travel.

MORAL: *A good substitute for Wisdom has not yet been discovered.*

THE CURE OF THE GULPER

"NO, my child; the dragons and monsters are not all gone. There are just as many as ever there were, and they are just as powerful and wicked, only we fight them differently now. We do not send for a good fairy, but for some other kind of dragon.

"Not long ago, and not far away, there was a farming country of great thrift and prosperity, but much handicapped by the smallness of its horses,— the best of these could carry only a small load,—so every one was surprised, and later on delighted, when a philosopher brought them a wonderful monster that was stronger than a thousand horses. This was called a Gulper, and it drew the heaviest loads as

though they were nothing. Large numbers were bred, and soon each community had at least one. Before long, however, the new beasts developed an unpleasant nature. Their original meekness began to disappear. They became surly, then dangerous; at last they had to be pampered and pacified on all occasions. They still did a great deal of the heaviest work, but became so tyrannical and outrageous in their demands that each community was reduced to a state of slavery, and its monster terrorized all and owned everything, quickly destroying those who resisted him. There was never a more downtrodden people. Things were as bad as possible, when a naturalist, one day, as he walked in the woods and pondered this terrible condition, said:

"'In my world every beast has his foe

that tames him when he outrages the bounds. If I only could find the Bugaboo of the Gulper!'

"So he sought and sought and sought; then he came to the country whence they had brought the Gulper, and there he found the Gulper's Bugaboo. It was nothing but an ordinary monoculous Angletail. It was a slim yellow thing with very short legs, one immense red eye at each end of its body, and a long thin tail that grew out of the middle of its back and was carried stiffly raised and pointing behind. The Angletail could go backward or forward equally well, but one could always tell beforehand which way it was going, because the tail would switch over and point backward, and the eye at the end which now became the rear would lose its light and would go sleepy, while

the other fairly blazed with fire. The Angletail was much smaller than the Gulper, but its activity was wonderful. The Gulper was swift, but the Angletail could climb hills and dodge in a way that was far beyond the ablest Gulper, and once it got after the monster it never stopped running alongside till it had sucked his life-blood. Not that Gulpers were its only food, but the farmers did all they could to urge on the Angletail, and it was very ready to respond. Finally all a man had to do to tame a rebellious Gulper was to put up his mouth as though *about to whistle* for the monoculous one, and at once the monster was cowed and glad to make any kind of terms, and they all lived happy ever after.

"You don't understand? Well, my child, the Gulper is the greedy, grinding

railroad company, and its Bugaboo is the trolley-car. Let us hope that there will always be deadly enmity between the monopolous Gulper and the monoculous Angletail."

MORAL: *Every bug has its bugaboo.*

HOW THE GIRAFFE BECAME

AGES ago in the deserts of Africa there lived a little brown Antelope.

He was not strong like the Lion, nor big like the Elephant, nor had he horns like the Koodoo, nor claws like the Leopard. He could not swim, nor could he climb or fly. When danger came he could do nothing but run away, and this he did very well.

But he was not satisfied.

One day he saw a Man, and he walked quietly up to look more closely at the strange creature of whom he had often heard. As he watched he saw a Lion crawling to spring on the Man. Now the Antelope's mother had taught him that when he saw a Lion trying to

kill some creature he must warn that creature; this is desert etiquette. So he gave a great start, and snorting out, "Lion! Lion!" he bounded past the Man, spreading the little white danger-flag that some writers call his tail. The Man heard the warning and got into a tree in time to escape the Lion. After the Lion had gone the Man called the Antelope and said:

"Little Antelope, I am a prophet of Allah; you have saved my life from that ill-informed Lion, and therefore you shall have whatever you ask."

Then the Antelope said: "When Allah made the beasts it seems he forgot me, for he gave me no claws, teeth, horns, nor tail to flap the flies, nor strength nor power to fly, climb, or swim. Please, good Prophet, tell him that he left me

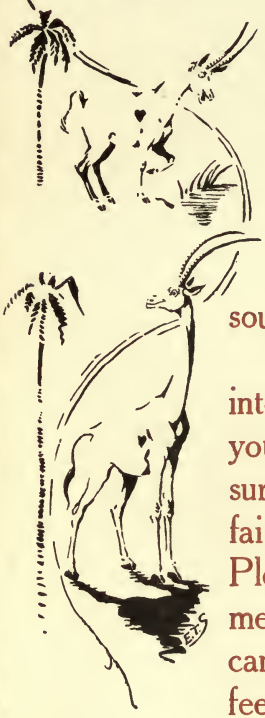
out and ask him to give me the things I need."

"But," said the Prophet, "you cannot have all: if you have size you cannot climb a tree; if strength, you need not be swift."

But all the Prophet's talk was in vain; the little Antelope wanted at least horns, size, strength, a long fly-flapper tail. "Then," said he, "I shall be content." To this the Prophet said: "So be it, little Antelope; go to the long slope of Mount Epoch, and there roll in the Dust of Ages."

The Antelope did so, and was overjoyed to find himself of great size and strength, with a beautiful fly-flapper tail, and two long horns on his head.

After some time, however, he found that there was yet much needed to



complete his happiness. His great size called for so much more food that he had to live in the rank bushes, where he could not see the lurking dangers; and, besides, it cost him his speed, so that his troubles were increased. Therefore he again sought the Prophet and said:

"Good Prophet, it was clearly your intention to make me happy for saving your life at great risk to myself. Now, surely you are not going to make a failure of any of your good plans. Please ask Allah to complete my equipment by giving me a long neck so I can overlook the bushes where I must feed, and also increase my speed, for I need it."

"Very good," said the Prophet. "Now go and bathe in the Long Reach of the

River called the Wear-of-Time." The Antelope did so, and when he came out he had a long neck and legs, as he had wished.

But his long neck made grazing troublesome, and his great weight made marshy ground dangerous, so he was driven to seek his food among the bushes as tall as himself, where the ground was firm.

At length there came a very dry year when all the low foliage died, and the Antelope had eaten all he could reach and was like to die of hunger. So he sought the Prophet as before, and begged his aid to make his neck yet longer, that he might reach the topmost foliage. "As a matter of fact," said the Antelope, "I would gladly give up these stupid horns for a few more inches of neck."

"Very good," said the Prophet. "Go

and pass through the Burning Valley called the Tribulator of Selection."

The Antelope did so, and found himself as he had wished, with a neck that would reach the tallest trees, but with the useless horns burnt off where the hair of his head ended.

Before long the Antelope was back with a new request. His long yellow neck was too easily seen afar; he wanted it painted like a tree-trunk; and the four hoofs he still had on each foot were a positive handicap — he knew he could get around faster if they were reduced to two on each foot. "Then," said he, "I know I should really and truly be content."

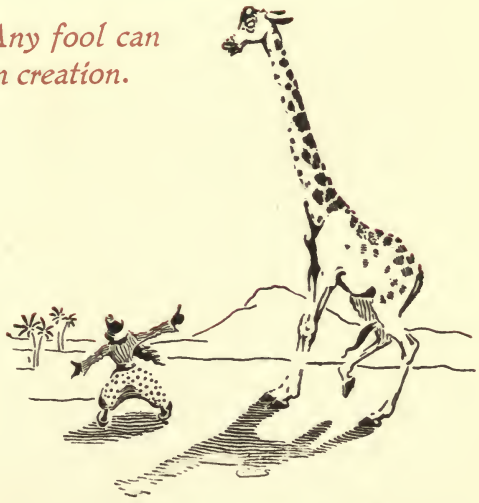
But in all his asking the Antelope never once asked for a *change of heart*, and the Prophet, out of all patience, said: "These last requests shall be granted when you

have eaten of the tree called Environal Response; but to prevent you making any more you shall henceforth forever be mute." And it was so.

There he is to-day, of vast stature, the tallest in the world, only two hoofs on each foot, no horns, voiceless—a huge creature, truly; but his heart is still the heart of the timid little Antelope, and the days of his kind are numbered.

While those of his race who were content as Allah meant them to be—nothing but swift—still dwell in safety on their wild, free deserts in the Land of the Sun.

MORAL: *Any fool can improve on creation.*



THREE LORDS AND A LITTLE LORD

THERE were three Lords and a little Lord in the forest where Manitou made them.

The first was Mi-in-gan. He was swift as the spotted Redfin and tireless as the Kamanistiquia where it leaps from Kakabeka Rock to the boiling gorge of the Gitche Nanka. His voice was like the moan of a far looming whirlwind—not loud nor rough, but soft, and yet with a tone to freeze the stoutest heart. His weapons were twenty-four white arrows that pierced the foe, then leaped back again to their quiver; and his cunning was like that of the Wa-wa of many snows.

In this was his power—in this and in his tireless feet.

The second great Lord was Mūs-wa, of mighty strength and great stature. None could equal him. When he went to war, he brandished four war-clubs and a hundred spears that always returned to his hand after throwing. His voice was like the rending of ice in the Hunger Moon. He was swiftest of them all and strongest of them all, and in his great strength he put all his trust.

The third was Mai-kwa, the silent. He was strong, but less so than Mūs-wa. He was cunning, but less so than Mi-in-gan. He carried two great clubs and had twelve white arrows which pierced and returned to the quiver.

There was yet another, a little Lord in

the Forest, Wee-nusk. He was weak and small, and he knew it. He had two little axes for wood-cutting. He had no great strength, and he knew it, and knowing his weakness, he had wisdom.

Now Manitou, when he had made them and the Forest, spake thus:

"Behold, I have made you and given you the Forest to live in. Go now and live according to the law of the Forest; but remember this, ye children of Mother Earth: to all the Earth-born there comes a day of dire extremity, of peril beyond all power to save but one—the power of Mother Earth. Therefore, be ready to seek her. Keep open and clear the trail to her abode. Make plain the way in Sunshine of prosperity, for no trail opens in the hour of dreadful stress."

But Mūs-wa trusted in his might. He

MJEINEGAN
MUSEWA
MAJEKWA

said: "I am the strongest in the Wood." And Mi-in-gan trusted in his cunning. He said: "I am the wisest in the Wood." And Mai-kwa said: "I am wise as fearless Mi-in-gan, and strong as fearless Mūswa. Why should I fear?"

Only Wee-nusk remembered the warning. He was not cunning, but he spent part of each spring and fall making plain the trail to Mother Earth. So when the Far-Killing Mystery reached the Forest, the first to go down was the strong Mūswa, and the second the tireless, cunning Mi-in-gan, and the third was Mai-kwa. Their strength was as a burnt grass-blade; their cunning was silly. There was no help for them, for they knew no trail of escape.

But Wee-nusk ran to Mother Earth, and the Far-Killing Mystery could in no wise do him harm.

So to-day he alone remains in the Land of the Pequot. Mūs-wa, the great Moose, is gone; Mi-in-gan, the cunning Wolf, is gone; Mai-kwa, the strong and cunning Bear, is gone.

They forgot the road to Mother Earth, and the Rifle wiped them out.

But Wee-nusk, the weak and unintelligent Woodchuck, is left, the only Lord of the Forest; for he trusts not to himself but flies for refuge to the Earth.

MORAL: *Get back, ye Earth-born, back to Mother Earth.*

THE TEN TRAILS

ONCE there were two Indians who went out together to hunt. Hapeda was very strong and swift and a wonderful bowman. Chatun was much weaker and carried a weaker bow; but he was very patient.

As they went through the hills they came on the fresh track of a small Deer. Chatun said: "My brother, I shall follow that."

But Hapeda said: "You may if you like, but a mighty hunter like me wants bigger game."

So they parted.

Hapeda went on for an hour or more and found the track of ten large Elk going

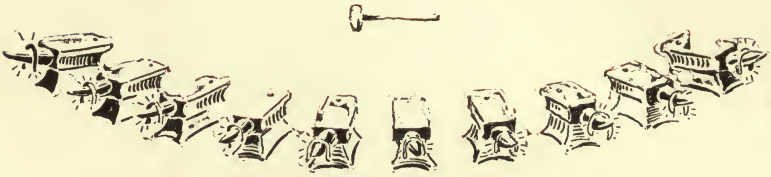
different ways. He took the trail of the largest and followed for a long way, but not coming up with it, he said: "That one is evidently traveling. I should have taken one of the others."

So he went back to the place where he first found it, and took up the trail of another. After a hunt of over an hour in which he failed to get a shot, he said: "I have followed another traveler. I 'll go back and take up the trail of one that is feeding."

But again, after a short pursuit, he gave up that one to go back and try another that seemed more promising. Thus he spent a whole day trying each of the trails for a short time, and at night came back to camp with nothing, to find that Chatun, though his inferior in all other

ways, had proved wiser. He had stuck doggedly to the trail of the one little Deer, and now had its carcass safely in camp.

MORAL: *The Prize is always at the end of the trail.*



WHERE TRUTH LIVES

"It 's my opinion," said the Frog in the well, "that the size of the ocean is greatly overrated."

THE TWIN STARS

Two-Bright-Eyes went wandering out
To chase the Whippoorwill;
Two-Bright-Eyes got lost and left
Our teepee—oh, so still!

Two-Bright-Eyes was lifted up
To sparkle in the skies
And look like stars,—but we know well
That that 's our lost Bright-Eyes.

She is looking for the camp,
She would come back if she could;
She is peeping thro' the tree-tops
For the teepee in the wood.

THE TWO LOG-ROLLERS

"Friend Beaver," the Bear said, with scorn in his tone,
"I roll far more logs in a day
Than you and your family, all toiling at once,
Can roll while a year wears away."

"Very true," said the Beaver, at work on his dam;
"But, since the blunt facts must be told,
I get some results from my dozen small logs;
While your logs are just simply *rolled*."

THE CONVERTED SOAP-BOILER

A CERTAIN good man loved things old because they were quaint. He said he would gladly give up locomotives and printing-presses to have "the" spelled "ye," as of old. It gave him a spasm of joy to see a building called a "bvilding," and he was filled with gloats whenever he could get a newspaper to spell "gospel" as "goſpel," or "honor" as "honoure"—it was "so qvaint, so Shakespearian!"

A friend, who was making a fortune boiling soap by day, and spending it in gathering a library by night, took him to task one day, thus: "There was a time in the evolution of the alphabet when *u* and *v*, *d* and *t*, *p* and *b*, *w* and *v*, etc., were imper-

fectly differentiated, and used somewhat indiscriminately; but to revive this thing now is to breed confusion, to step backward and downward. It is as bad as restoring the useless tags that the horse once had on each side of his feet where formerly there were other toes. In their day these oddities of spelling reflected their time; to import them into our present day is not only opposed to common sense, it is as dishonest as if we were to stamp a modern product 'Anno Dom.CC.' Suppose, now, one of these spurious imitative inscriptions to be dug up five hundred years hence. Though only five hundred years old, the internal evidence makes it double that age, thus lending itself to a lie and building up an abominable deceit."

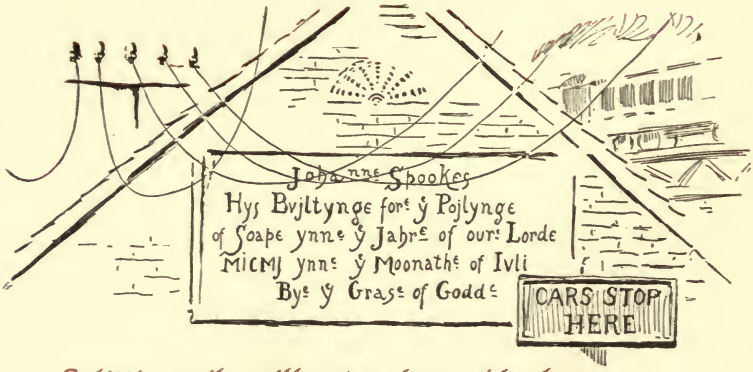
"Thou art all wronge," said the antiquary. "Ye delycious quaintnesse of ye

antient masters waye did breede yem an atmosphere of sweetnesse and joyaunce yat was verily ye mother of theire greatnesse. Shakespeare never could have written had he been yforced to a type-writer, neither could Spenser have sung had he been compelled to spell 'faerie' as 'fairy.' Ye atmosphere which bred yem was bred of ye quaintnesse of yr spelling."

The soap-boiler was touched, for he loved books. He pondered all these things for long, and then he wrote to his friend:

"Verily mine eyen are oped. I have seen a greate lichte and have a newe hearte withinne me. Odzooks! I have lost much time, pardee, but I will this atmosphere of quaintnesse in mine owne kingdomme, for I have charged mine hirelings that they call me 'ye master.' Be-

shrew me, but I am minded to oust mine—my—type-writer—is it not so called?—and hie me to ye holy goose-quille of mine fathers. I have, moreover, inscribed a newe tablet for ye gabel that is ye ende of mine workes wherein I do boyle mine soap. By my halidome, methinks it lilteth right merrilie and smacketh of much and comelie quaintnesse."

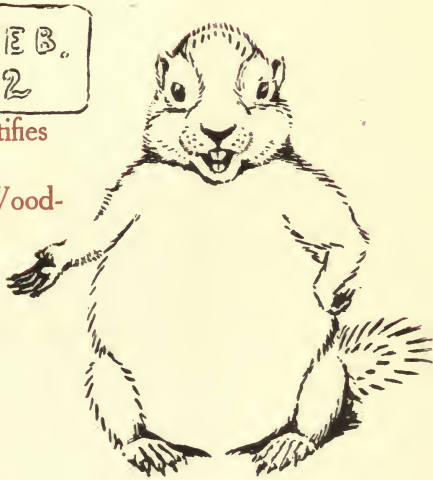


Splitting rails will not make an Abraham Lincoln.

THE WISE WOODCHUCK

OF all the beasts that roamed the woods in
their primeval state,
The Woodchuck only holds his own and keeps
right up to date;
And why he never lost his grip may prove a
plan of worth:
He sticks to this first principle, "Get back to
Mother Earth."
Another thing he demonstrates: the safest kind
of wealth
Is brains with up-to-date ideas, a hide just
crammed with health.
A final guide in Woodchuck life is this well-
known refrain:
"He ought to die who has n't sense to come in
from the rain."
The Chipmunk stores up hoards of nuts, which
robbers steal away;
The Fox stays out late every night and dearly
has to pay:
But Woodchuck hides when fall's feasts fail; his
fat his only hoard
For months of subsoil serious thought, as happy
as a lord.

And every year at Candlemas he reappears on earth,
For, as astronomers well know, a new
conjunction's birth
Takes place that day among the stars, and
settles for good reason
The kind of weather coming for the balance of
the season.
Then if the sky is overcast with murky clouds
and gray,
This is a sign of winter past and springtime on
the way;
But if, in air all frosty clear, the sun, unveiled
and bright,
Should cast his shadow on the snow, he reads
the sign aright,
And turns back to his peaceful cell, renews his meditation
For six hard weeks, which justifies his sage prognostication.
Then loud we sing the wise Woodchuck: he hides when
storms are rife;
He values only health and wits, hence his success in life.



THE FAIRY LAMPS

THERE was once a little bare-legged, brown-limbed boy who spent all his time in the woods. He loved the woods and all that was in them. He used to look, not at the flowers, but deep down into them, and not at the singing bird, but into its eyes, to its little heart; and so he got an insight better than most others, and he quite gave up collecting birds' eggs.

But the woods were full of mysteries. He used to hear little bursts of song, and when he came to the place he could find no bird there. Noises and move-

ments would just escape him. In the woods he saw strange tracks, and one day, at length, he saw a wonderful bird making these very tracks. He had never seen the bird before, and would have thought it a great rarity had he not seen its tracks everywhere. So he learned that the woods were full of beautiful creatures that were skilful and quick to avoid him.

One day, as he passed by a spot for the hundredth time, he found a bird's nest. It must have been there for long, and yet he had not seen it; and so he learned how blind he was, and he exclaimed: "Oh, if only I could see, then I might understand these things! If only I knew! If I could see but for once how many there are and how near! If only every bird would wear over its nest this evening a little lamp to show me!"

The sun was down now; but all at once there was a soft light on the path, and in the middle of it the brown boy saw a Little Brown Lady in a long robe, and in her hand a rod.

She smiled pleasantly and said: "Little boy, I am the Fairy of the Woods. I have been watching you for long. I like you. You seem to be different from other boys. Your request shall be granted."

Then she faded away. But at once the whole landscape twinkled over with wonderful little lamps—long lamps, short lamps, red, blue, and green, high and low, doubles, singles, and groups: wherever he looked were lamps—twinkle, twinkle, twinkle, here and everywhere, until the forest shone like the starry sky. He ran to the nearest, and there, surely, was a bird's nest. He ran to the next; yes,

another nest. And here and there each different kind of lamp stood for another kind of nest. A beautiful purple blaze in a low tangle caught his eye. He ran there, and found a nest he had never seen before. It was full of purple eggs, and there was the rare bird he had seen but once. It was chanting the weird song he had often heard, but never traced. But the eggs were the marvelous things. His old egg-collecting instinct broke out. He reached forth to clutch the wonderful prize, and—in an instant all the lights went out. There was nothing but the black woods about him. Then on the pathway shone again the soft light. It grew brighter, till in the middle of it he saw the Little Brown Lady—the Fairy of the Woods. But she was not smiling now. Her face was stern and sad as she said: "I fear I

set you over-high. I thought you better than the rest. Keep this in mind:

"Who reverence not the lamp of life can never see its light."

Then she faded from his view.

THE SCATTERATIONIST

SIMS settlement was beginning to feel itself a place of importance. The chief road had a fence on both sides of it for over a mile, and a blaze on a large tree was already ordered with the official inscription "Main street." There had been talk of the possibility of a store, and local pride broke forth in noble eruption when a meeting was called to petition for a post-office. The wisdom, worth, and wealth of the place were represented by old Sims. He was a man of advanced ideas, the natural leader of the community; and after all the questions had been duly discussed, the store and post-office resolved upon, the question of who was

to run them came up. There were several aspirants, but old Sims led the meeting, expressing the majority and crushing the minority in a brief but satisfactory speech:

"Fust of all, boys, I 'm opposed to this yer centerin' of everything in one place. Now that 's jest what hez been the rooin of England; that is why London ain't never amounted to nothin'—everything at London. London is England; England is London. If London 's took, England 's took, says I, an' that hez been her rooin.

"The idee of House o' Lords an' House o' Commons in the same town! It ain't fair, I tell ye; it 's a hog trick. Why did n't they give some little place a chance instead o' buildin' up a blastin' monopoly like that? Same thing hez

rooined New York, an' I don't propose to hev our town rooined at the start.

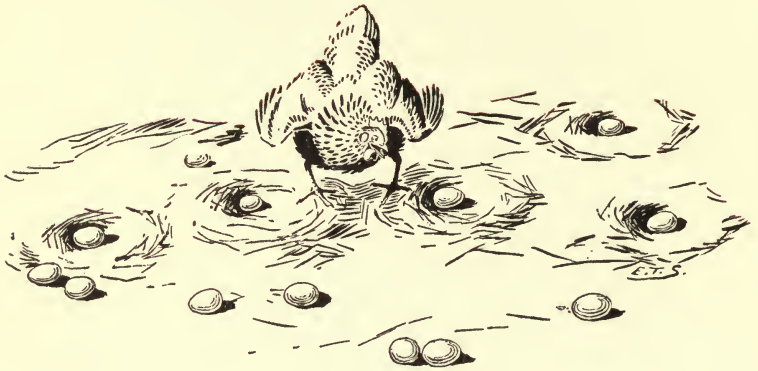
"Now I say no man hez any right to live on the public. 'Live an' let live,' says I; an' if we let one man run this yer store, it 's tantamount to makin' the others the slaves of a monopoly. Every man hez as much right as another to sell goods, an' there is only one fair way to do it, an' that is give all a chance; an' sence it falls to me to make a suggestion, I says, let Bill Jones thar sell the tea; let Ike Yates hev the sugar; Smithers kin handle the salt; Deacon Blight seems naturally adapted for the vinegar; and the other claims kin be considered later. I 'll take the post-office meself down to my own farm. Now that 's fair to all."

There was no flaw in the logic; it was most convincing. Those who would fight

found themselves without a weapon, and Scatteration Flat became a model of decentralization.

Work? Oh, yes, it works. Things get badly mixed at times, and it takes a man all day to buy his week's groceries; but old Sims says it works.

MORAL: *The hen goes chickless that scatters its eggs.*



THE POINT OF VIEW

A QUIET country home among fruit-trees and shrubbery; the gray-bearded Master, a famous vegetarian, in the porch reading a paper; a rolling meadow; a flock of well-fed sheep.

SCENE I. In the Master's House. The Graybeard looking over the meadow.

"How can human beings be so bestial as to prey on their flocks? For me there is no greater pleasure than to know I can make their lives happy. Their annual wool is ample payment for their keep. But I see by the paper that this awful sheep pestilence has broken out on the coast. I must waste no time; nothing but inoculation can save them. Poor things, how I

wish I could spare them this pain!" So the Graybeard, with his man, caught the terrified sheep one by one, while a butcher in a blue blouse sat on the fence and grinned. Each sheep suffered a sharp pang when the inoculator pierced its skin. Each was more or less ill afterward. But all recovered, and the plague which swept the country a month later left only them alive of all the countless flocks.

SCENE II. Among the sheep.

First Sheep: "Ah, how happy we should be but for that treacherous gray-bearded monster! Sometimes and for long he feeds us and seems kind, and then without any just cause there is a change, as the other day, when he came with his accomplice and ran us down one by one and stabbed us with some devilish in-

strument of torture, so that we all were very ill afterward. How we hate the brute!"

Second Sheep: "If only we could come into the power of that gentle creature in the blue blouse!"

Chorus: "Ah, that would be joy! Bah—bah—bah!"

MORAL: *The more we know the less we grumble.*

THE ORIGIN OF THE BLUEBIRD

NINNA-BO-JOU, the Sun-god, was sleeping his winter's sleep on the big island just above the thunder-dam that men call Niagara. · Four moons had waned, but still he slept. The frost draperies of his couch were gone; his white blanket was burned into holes; he turned over a little. Then the ice on the river cracked like near thunder. When he turned again it began to slip over the big beaver-dam of Niagara, but still he did not awake.

The great Er-Beaver in his pond flapped his tail, and the waves rolled away to the shore and set the ice heaving, cracking, and groaning; but Ninna-bo-jou slept.

Then the Ice-demons pounded the shore of the island with their clubs. They pushed back the whole river-flood till the channel was dry, then let it rush down like the end of all things, and they shouted together:

"Ninna-bo-jou! Ninna-bo-jou! Ninna-bo-jou!"

But still he slept calmly on. Then came a soft, sweet voice, more gentle than the mating turtle of Miami. It was in the air, but it was nowhere, and yet it was in the trees, in the water, and it was in Ninna-bo-jou too. He felt it, and it awoke him. He sat up and looked about. His white blanket was gone; only a few tatters of it were to be seen in the shady places. In the snowy spots the shreds of the fringe with its beads had taken root and were growing into little

flowers with beady eyes. The small voice kept crying: "Awake; the Spring is coming!"

Ninna-bo-jou said: "Little voice, where are you? Come here."

But the little voice, being everywhere, was nowhere, and could not come at the hero's call.

So he said: "Little voice, you are nowhere because you have no place to live in; I will make you a house."

So Ninna-bo-jou took a curl of Birch bark and made a little wigwam, and because the voice came from the skies he painted the wigwam with blue mud, and to show that it came from the Sunland he painted a red sun on it. On the floor he spread a scrap of his own white blanket, then for a fire he breathed into it a spark of life, and said: "Here, little voice,

is your wigwam." The little voice entered and took possession, but Ninnabo-jou had breathed the spark of life into it. The smoke-vent wings began to move and to flap, and the little wigwam turned into a beautiful Bluebird with a red sun on its breast and a shirt of white. Away it flew, but every Spring it comes, the Bluebird of the Spring. The voice still dwells in it, and we feel that it has lost nothing of its earliest power when we hear it cry: "Awake; the Spring is coming!"

THE GITCH-E O-KOK-O-HOO

AFTER the Great Spirit had made the world and the creatures in it, he made the Gitch-e O-kok-o-hoo. This was like an Owl, but bigger than anything else alive, and his voice was like a river plunging over a rocky ledge. He was so big that he thought he did it all himself, and was puffed up.

The Blue Jay is the mischief-maker of the woods. He is very smart and impudent; so one day when the Gitch-e O-kok-o-hoo was making thunder in his throat, the Blue Jay said: "Pooh, Gitch-e O-kok-o-hoo, you don't call that a big noise! You should hear Niagara; then you would never twitter again."

Now Niagara was the last thing the

Manitou had made; it never ceases to utter the last word of the Great Spirit in creating it: "Forever! forever! forever!"

But Gitch-e O-kok-o-hoo was nettled at hearing his song called a "twitter," and he said: "Niagara, Niagara! I'm sick of hearing about Niagara. I will go and silence Niagara for always." So he flew to Niagara, and the Blue Jay snickered and followed to see the fun.

When they came to Niagara where it thundered down, the Gitch-e O-kok-o-hoo began bawling to drown the noise of it, but could not make himself heard.

"Wa-wa-wa," said the Gitch-e O-kok-o-hoo, with great effort and only for a minute.

"WA-WA-WA-WA," said the river, steadily, easily, and forever.

"Wa-wa-wa!" shrieked Gitch-e O-

kok-o-hoo; but it was so utterly lost that he could not hear it himself, and he began to feel small; and he felt smaller and got smaller and smaller, until he was no bigger than a Sparrow, and his voice, instead of being like a great cataract, became like the dropping of water, just a little

Tink-tank-tink,
Tink-tank-tink.

And this is why the Indians give to this smallest of the Owls the name of "the water-dropping bird."

When the top is wider than the root, the tree goes down.

THE SUNKEN ROCK

"I POSITIVELY decline to have that young Clippercut in my house again. His influence on my son is most dangerous."

"Why, my friend, he is far from being a bad fellow. He has his follies, I admit, but how unlike such really vicious men as Grogster, Cardflip, and Ponyback!"

"Sir, *the only danger of a sunken rock is that it is not sunk deep enough.*"

DOGWOOD

WHEN Adam was in Eden, his
choicest plant of all
Was a glorious showy *Dogwood*
that bloomed above the wall.
The Devil viewed its spotless white; he marked
the Gardener's pride,
And vowed he 'd spoil the garden's show;—
but dared not go inside.
And so he climbed a *Locust-tree* that grew outside
the foss,
And reached to shake,—but found, alas! each
bloom was in a cross,
Which put them all beyond his power to wither
or to blight.
The worst that he could do was give each
snowy leaf a bite:
And there it shows and always will; and where
the Devil sat

Upon the *Locust* bough you 'll see a scorched
and blackened mat.
And now the *Locust* wears around each limb a
spiky fence
So sharp and deadly that Old Nick has never
climbed it since.

THE THREE PHŒBES OF WYNDYGOUL

THREE little Phœbes came to Wyndygoul in the month of March, and sang their song in the trees by the water till it was time to set about nesting.

The first one was a Wise Little Bird,—even he suspected that,—and after thinking it all out he said: "I shall build high on the rock that is above the Lake of Wyndygoul, and the deep water shall be the moat of my castle."

Then the second one thought it all out, and he was the Wisest of all the Phœbes. He simply knew it all, and he knew that he knew. So he said: "The rock has its advantages, but it is very ex-

posed to the enemies above. I shall build under this low root on the bank. It shelters all sides, my nest will be concealed, and the rushing water of the River of Wyndygoul shall be the protecting moat of my castle."

But the third little Phœbe was a Little Fool, and he knew it. And he said to his wife: "We are so foolish we cannot foresee all the dangers — we do not even know what they are; but we do know this: that there is a Blue Devil called the Blue Jay, and a Brown Devil called the Hawk, and a Night Devil called the Weasel, and we know that *they* are not the biggest things on earth. There is some one here bigger than they. Let us put our trust in him. We will build our nest between the sticks of his nest: perhaps he will protect us."

So they did. They put the nest right in the porch of his house. It was not high, and it was not hidden, nor was there any moat to their castle. Its only protection was an "influence," and that was invisible; but it was felt all about the porch that is on the lawn that is above the Lake of Wyndygoul.

And there they all sat on a warm April morning when the nests were made, the Wise One on the rock singing "Phœ-bee," and the Very Wise One under the root singing "Phœ-be," and the Foolish One on the porch singing "Phœbe-e."

They sang so loudly that a Hawk, passing by, thought, "Something is up," and he looked for the nests; but the one on the rock he could not reach, the one

under the root he could not find, and the one on the porch he dared not go near.

And the Weasel heard them and thought, "Oh, ho! I shall investigate this to-night." But the chilly water kept him from the two nests, and there was an uncomfortable feeling about the porch that he preferred to avoid.

But there came at length the Blue Devil called the Jay. When he heard the singing he said: "Where there are songs there are nests." And he found where the nests were, by watching their owners. So he flew to the rock and looked in that nest. It was finished, but empty. "Very good," said the Blue Jay; "I can wait."

Then he flew to the root and looked into that nest, and there was one egg.

"Oh, ho!" said the Jay, "this is good luck, but not enough. I know that Phœbes lay more than one egg. I can wait." So, though his beak watered a little, he let it alone and went—but no; he did not go to the porch, because the man had made an "influence" there, and it was repugnant to the Blue Jay.

And the three little Phœbes sang merrily their morning-song in the trees by the Lake of Wyndygoul.

Next morning the Blue Jay went over to the rock nest, and there was one egg in it, and he said: "Very good as far as it goes, but I can wait. I 'll see you later."

Then he went to the nest under the root,—a very hard nest to find it had been, —and there were two eggs. The Blue Jay turned his wicked head on one side and counted them with his right eye, then on the other side and counted them with

his left eye, and said: "This is better, but I know that a Phœbe lays more than two eggs. I can wait."

He did not go to the porch. He had his own reasons. And next morning the three little Phœbes sang their three little songs in the trees by the Lake of Wyndygoul.

But the Blue Jay came as before, and he looked at the nest in the rock, and said: "Oh, ho! there are two eggs now. Keep on, my friends, keep on; this is true charity. You are going to feed the hungry. I think I will wait a little longer."

Then he went to the root above the water, and in that nest were three eggs. "Very good," said the Blue Jay. "A Phœbe-bird may lay four or even five eggs, but give me a sure thing." So he swallowed the three eggs in the root nest.

And next morning there were only two

little Phœbes singing happily in the trees by the Lake of Wyndygoul.

But the Blue Jay came around again two days later, and he called only at the rock nest. He looked out of his right eye, and then out of his left. Yes, there were four eggs in it now. "I know when a nest is ripe," said he, and he swallowed them all and tore down the nest. Then the little Wise Phœbe came and saw it, and was so heart-broken with sorrow that he tumbled into the lake and was drowned.

Next morning there was only one little Phœbe that merrily sang in the trees by the Lake of Wyndygoul.

But the Very Wisest Phœbe began to say to himself: "I made a mistake. I built too high up. My nest was all right, it was perfect, but a *little* too high."

So he began a new nest low down, close to the water, under the same black root,

by the River of Wyndygoul, and the Blue Jay could not reach it then; he only got wet in trying.

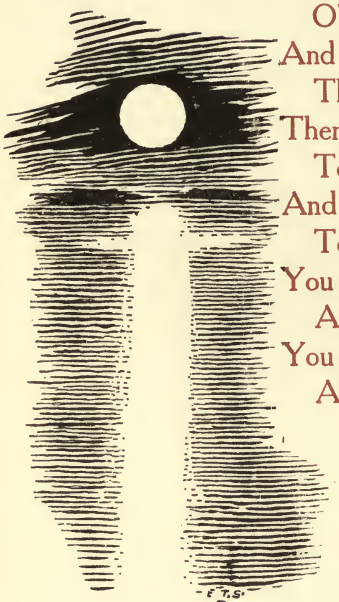
But one night, when there were three more eggs, and the Wisest Phœbe was sitting on them, a great Mink put his head out of the water and gobbled up Phœbe, eggs, and all.

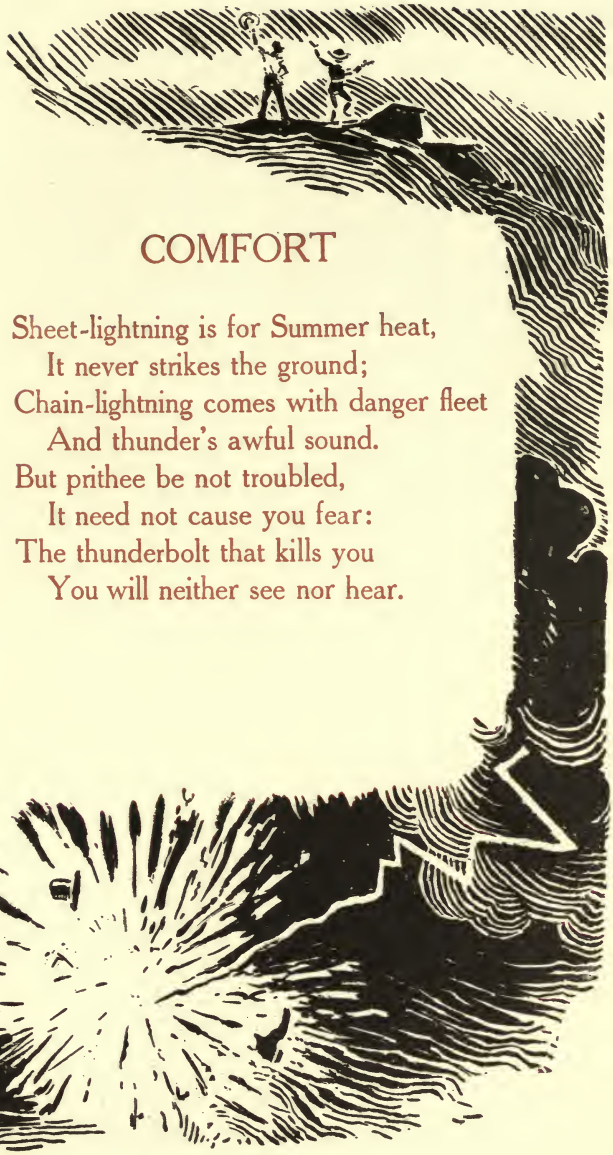
And the next morning there was only one little Phœbe-bird with his nest, and that was the Foolish One that knew he was foolish, and that built in the porch of the house that stood on the hill that is close by the Lake of Wyndygoul. And he sang all that spring, and his nest was soon filled with growing little ones. And they got bigger and bigger, till they were too big for the nest; and at length they all fledged and flew, and lived happily ever after in the trees by the Lake of Wyndygoul.

MORAL: *Wisdom is its own reward.*

THE ROAD TO FAIRYLAND

Do you seek the road to Fairyland?
I 'll tell; it 's easy, quite.
Wait till a yellow moon gets up
O'er purple seas by night,
And gilds a shining pathway
That is sparkling diamond bright.
Then, if no evil power be nigh
To thwart you, out of spite,
And if you know the very words
To cast a spell of might,
You get upon a thistledown,
And, if the breeze is right,
You sail away to Fairyland
Along this track of light.





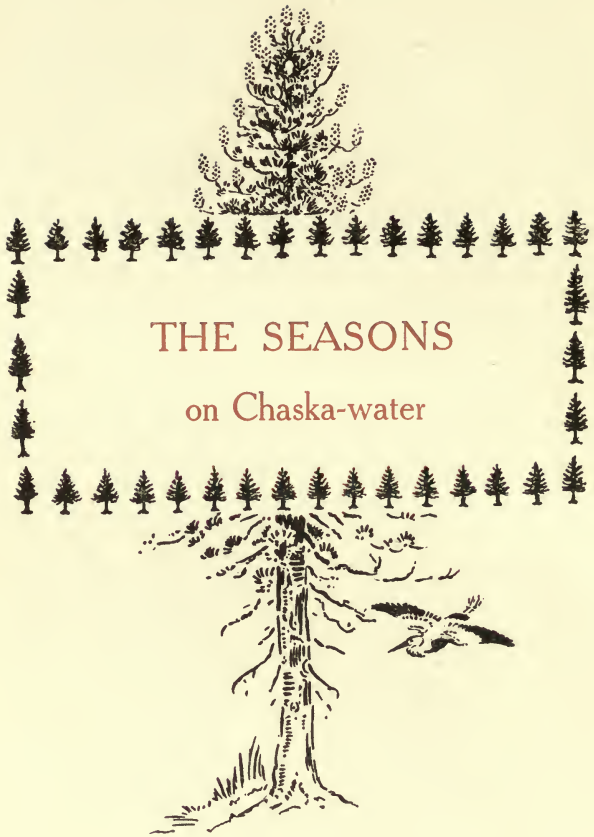
COMFORT

Sheet-lightning is for Summer heat,
It never strikes the ground;
Chain-lightning comes with danger fleet
And thunder's awful sound.
But prithee be not troubled,
It need not cause you fear:
The thunderbolt that kills you
You will neither see nor hear.

KALENDAR of the

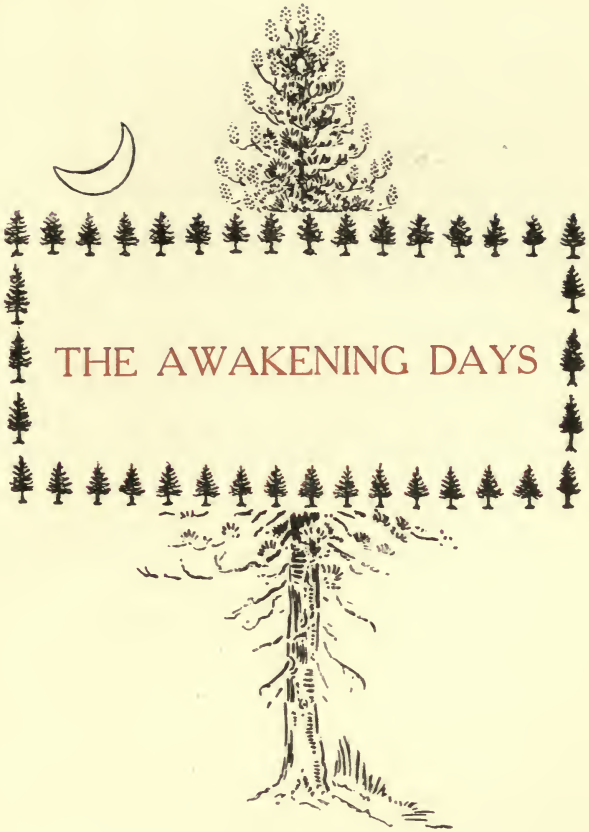
E.T.S.

SETON · INDIANS.



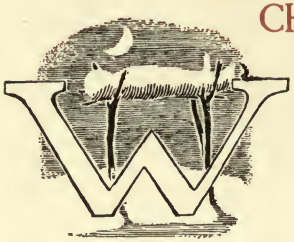
THE SEASONS

on Chaska-water



THE AWAKENING DAYS

THE AWAKENING DAYS ON CHASKA-WATER



HITER than death was Chaska-water, paler than fear. Well had the Ice-demons worked; swift and sure had their arrows sped. Only the waste of snow was there. Nothing was left that moved or cried or rustled on Chaska-water.

Oh, Moon that swung in the silent sky, knew ye ever so fearful a stillness?

Oh, black cloud blocking the blacker sky, was there ever so awful a deadness?

Tense—tenser—snap!

The breaking had come—not a sound, not a move, but a feeling. Up from the south came a gentle breath, a fanning too faint

for a south wind; only a feeling bearing a voice that reached not ears, but our being, and told of a coming—a coming.

A snow-lump fell from a fir-tree and ruffled the white on the water. "Coming, coming!" it sang.

A drop of water rolled from a sand-bank and dimpled the white on the water, with a "Coming, coming!"

Trronk—trronk—trronk, in the sky to the southward.

Trronk—trronk—trronk, the flying buglers come.

TRRONK — TRRONK — TRRONK, and louder. An arrow, a broad-headed arrow, appears.

TRONK — TRONK — TRONK, and a whirring of pinions, and the broad arrow grows to an army—an army of buglers.

Hark how they shake all the fir-trees! See how they stir the small snow-slides!

TRONK—TRÓNK—TRONK, and the ice on the lake is a-shiver.

TRÓNK—TRONK—TRÓNK, and the rill that was dead is a-running.

TRONK—TRÓNK—TRONK, and the stars are lost.

TRÓNK—TRONK—TRÓNK, and the sun comes up to blaze on the Chaska-water. Red and gold and bright is the sun, silver the bugles blowing.

TRONK, coming, coming, coming, and the clamor is lost in the northlands. The heralds have sped with the tidings.

"Coming, coming!" the Cranes are crying.

"Coming, coming!" the Woodpecker drums.

"Coming, coming!" the Reeds whisper, rejoicing and rasping together. Only the

snow-drifts weep, and their tears in a thousand rills run down, melting the snow and sawing the ice as they trickle on Chaska-water.

Open the stretches of water now; Gulls and Terns and Ducks are there, Divers and Butterflies, Midges and Gnats, singing and shouting, even while silent—"Coming, coming, coming!"

But loudest of all is the calm, clear sky of warmest blue, with a golden sun, a golden ball in the great over-bowl.

"Coming, coming, coming!" It booms in silence, and still looks down, and all is expectant—awaiting.

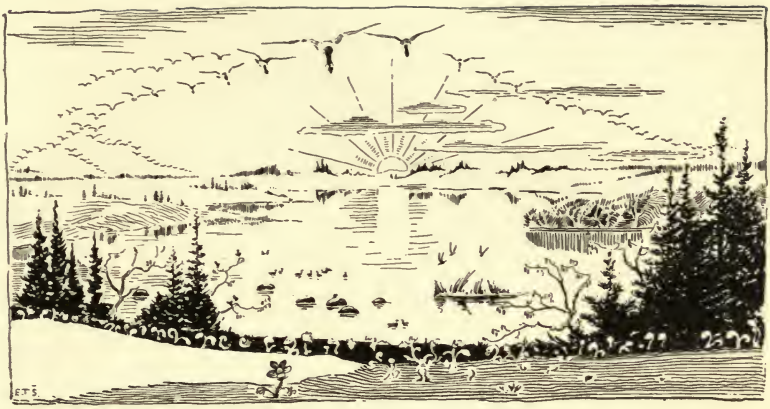
"Coming, coming!" And the myriad heralds' cries have melted and softened to a world-wide gentle murmur, almost a hush—the hush in the pageant that follows the heralds' announcement.

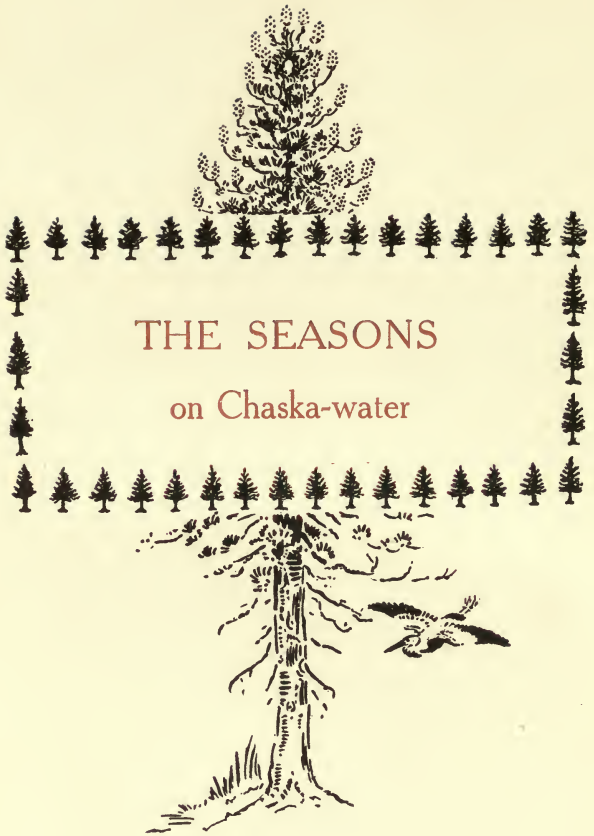
It came at last: not from the south or

the east or the west, not from the skies of promise, but from the sand at the edge of a dwindling snow-drift, up from the earth it came. Up to the light of the golden sun in a warm blue sky, raised and gazed a golden star in a warm blue bowl—the Sun-god flower, the Sand-hill bloom.

It sprang, and it spread like a fire on the plains, and it heaved and it drifted like opal snow—like lilacs all sprinkled with golden dust.

And this is the Sand-bloom born of the Spring; this is the Spring-bloom born of the Sand. This is the darling the heralds announced; and Spring is on Chaska-water.





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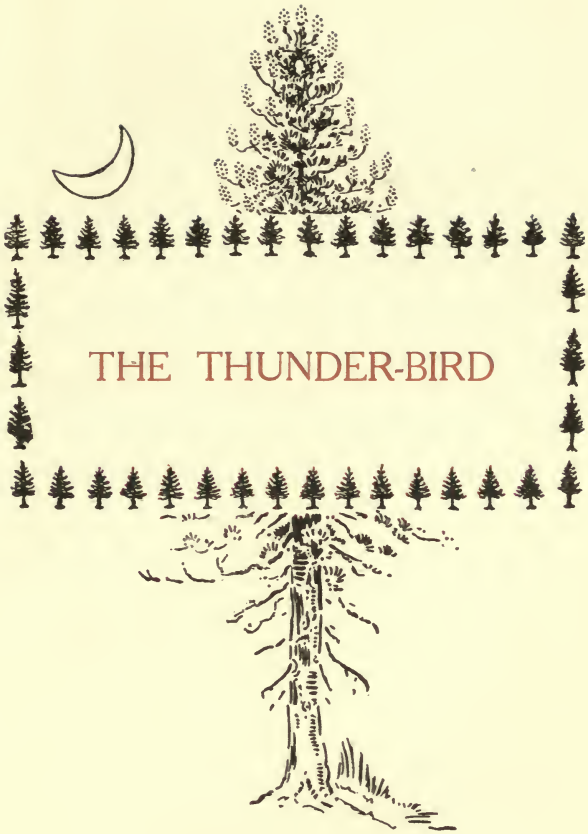


THE THUNDER-BIRD

THE THUNDER-BIRD ON CHASKA-WATER

EAD was the wind on Chaska-water.

Gone were the living breezes.

Long had the winter been banished, and the sheen of the blue on the hills of the brown was lost in the screening of leafage.

Life there was in the pool, in the bush, in the marsh and the wood: life, life in a precious abundance, but life that was heavy with heat-sleep.

Heavy hung the reeds and the cat-tails; heavy and limp the leather-soft leaves of the aspen.

Heavy and hot and dry were the Wolf-willows thick on the ridges.

Hot and dry and listless the Snake; dusty and hot was the Redtail.

A day and a week, and the air grew hotter and deadlier—fiercer than heat in the sweat-lodge; and muffled was every face, like the dead, in blankets—invisible blankets.

Instead of a sky was a coppery bowl, that fitted tight down at the world-rim.

The song of the birds had faded and died; there was no sound in the branches.

There was no song but the hot-weather bug, that *chirrred* as he added his torment.

"Better far was the onset of Peboan, for he gave a warning. Better, for we could escape to the south, but now we are buried and helpless."

Baked in their shells were the unhatched birds; roasted the feet of the downlings; and when, in the morning, the

mother Grouse clucked hoarsely to her brood, there was no answer, for dead were they lying around her.

O Wabung! the Wind of the Morning, O Mudjeekeewis, the West Wind! are ye dead? Are ye dead?

O Master of Life! art thou sleeping?

Mes-cha-cha-gan-is! thou swiftest of runners, take word.

Pai-hung! thou trumpet-voiced herald away.

Chewusson! best loved of singers, proclaim to the Master our fearful condition.

But Mes-cha-cha-gan-is was lying as dead. Pai-hung was feeble, and Chewusson silent as Pauguk. Only the Hot-weather Bug, the Cicada, was heard as he sang, as though glad of our torment, "*B-z-z-z-z-z.*"

And louder in glee he sang and thrilled

and rejoiced in his moment—"*B-z-z-z-z-z-z.*"

And louder—till Anee-mee-ki was awaked; not the Master, but he of the Wings and the Thunder.

"What stifles the Chaska-land? What murders the Middle-folk? The big bronze Over-bowl,—the lid of the Evil One,—killing the air, killing the rain."

And he flew down on it like a Night-hawk, stooping and booming—flew so it rumbled beneath him.

But it moved not.

Then he struck with his mountain-splitter, so it rumbled and rang; and again, so it split.

And the Evil One rushed hot-breathed to attack him.

Bang! thunder! he smote on the Death-bowl—so it crashed, but the red arrows flamed and rebounded.

The Evil One tore up an oak for a club.

Bang! Baím-wa—again, so the sky was dark with clouds of dust, the gloom and the heat were dreadful, and frightful the swishing of pinions, the eye-flashing glances were fearful, and the fighters were hot-breathed and cold-breathed, as they rumbled and pounded.

CRACK! BANG! and the bowl was a-shiver. *Swish, flash, ha-roo! Roll! Roll!* BAIM-WA, battler, warrior, fighter!

Bang! Baím-wa, again and again, and the rain of a month withheld came roaring in rivers downward.

Crack! arrows of light; crash! war-clubs of power, as the two were a-swirl, in the battle, on the hills of the Chaska-water — tossing, dashing, bending the groves; pelting with arrows

and spears and a sky full of hail; wrecking the trees and flowers, smashing the birds, jarring the hills, tilting the lake from end to end so its waters went foaming and racing. Flying coppery fragments in the sky; cold wind pursuing the hot wind; a broad and trampled pathway across all the Chaska-land where the two had united in battle.

Down, down on all sides fall the shards of the bowl. The blue sky is appearing. Down, down to the margin they fall—and are lost.

The pent-up rain has been emptied: only the gentle shower of last night is now falling. The frightened lake looks pleasantly blue and rippling. The cool breeze is abroad; and out of a thicket all trampled and smashed by the fighters

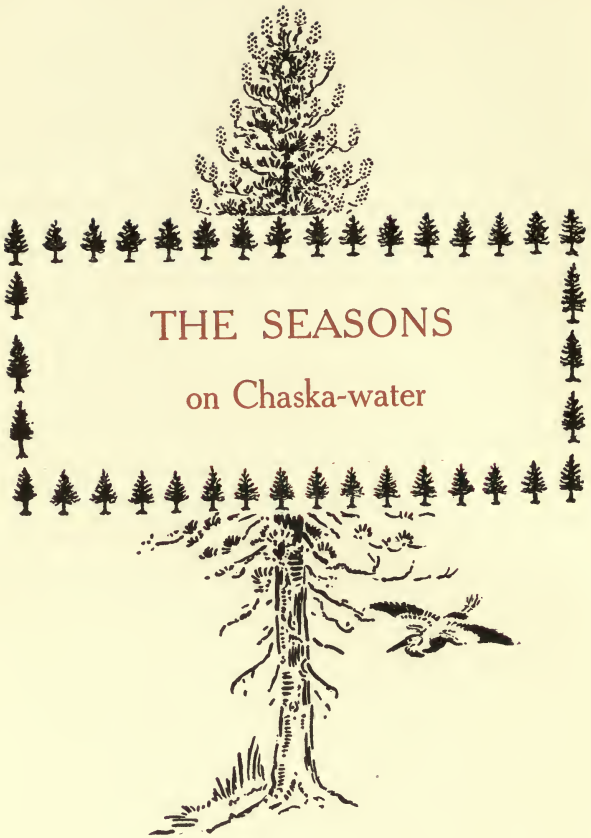
comes the voice of the gentlest and simplest of singers—the green-leaf singer—the Vireo.

The spirit bird, so frail that an unkind breath, a falling flower, might kill him, without a puissant guardian, what could he do?

But there is no fear in his voice, no broken plume in his wing; he is unwounded and fearless as he softly sings:

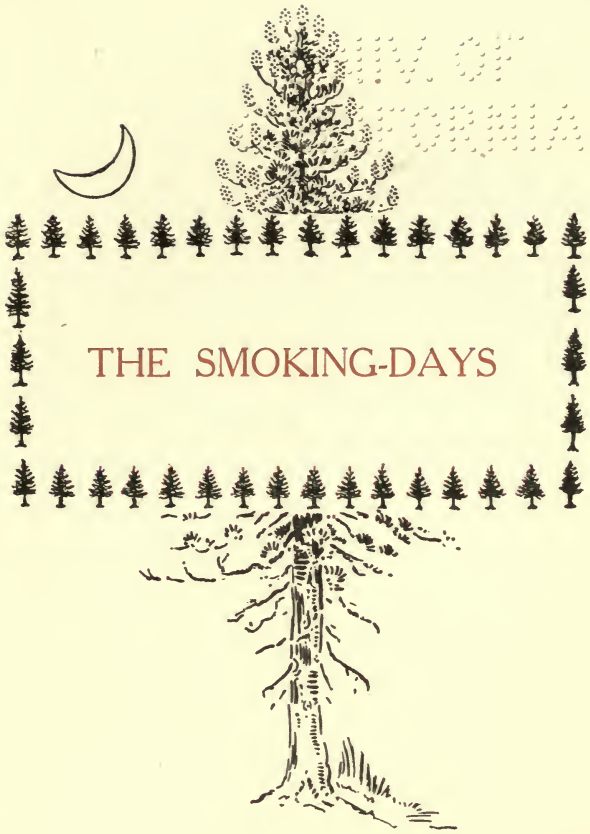
"Hear—hear me,
Hear—hear me."

A song of the bluest sky he sings, of the greenest leaf, of the freshest airs and the rippling lake; a song of the sweetest days, for now is the calm summer weather abroad—aglow on the Chaska-water.



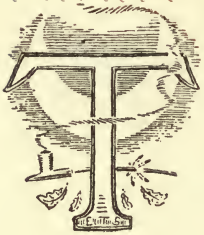
THE SEASONS

on Chaska-water



THE SMOKING-DAYS

THE SMOKING-DAYS ON CHASKA-WATER



THE Red moon waned over Chaska-water, the Red and the Hunting and Leaf-falling moons.

Signal-fires rose on the hills by the lake.

Signals to all: "Come to council."

Teepees were seen on the hills—painted and beautiful teepees, red and orange and brown, the tents of the tribes now assembling.

A herald outcries:

"The days grow short and the Mad moon comes. Old Peboan's scouts have spied out our camp. Oh, blacken your faces for Chaska-water."

That night came the hostile spies

again. There was fear on the camp in the morning.

The spruce-spires made uneasy sounds. A going there was in the tree-tops; a shivering sound in the aspens. And the hard white clouds above bumped together like ice-chunks in the spring flood of Assiniboinisipi.

The loud trumpeters crossed the sky; the squawkers were squawking; the rumblers were rumbling; a thousand added to the clamor born of the fear that was born of the clamor.

"The White foe comes; we are as the brood of Shesheep when Wah-gush finds them afoot and a mile from the water. We are caught unready."

There was confusion and panic—till Ninna-bo-jou was apprised, and, vexed at their fear, proclaimed: "I alone plan

for the future; take ye what I send ye"; and he blew a blast that shook down all the painted teepee covers; only the poles were left, standing in rows, on the banks of the Chaska-water.

"Hear, now, ye trembling Teepee-folk! War there is coming, but Truce for ten days there shall be, while I smoke my peace-pipe; Peace while its smoke is up-curling. Prepare ye, prepare for your trial of hardship."

Down on the bank of the Chaska-water sat he a-smoking; and the Teepee-folk, hastening, made ready.

The Bluejay began another hoard of acorns.

The Beaver added two span to his dam.

The Muskrat piled on one more layer of rushes to his hut-thatch.

The Partridge dusted his plumage, so it might fluff out more fully.

The Spruce-borer went his length more deep into the solid tree.

The Fox shook and licked his tail into shape for a muffler.

The Red Squirrel chewed ten more bundles of bark for his blanketing.

The Chipmunk stuffed another handful of earth into his alleyway.

The Gopher rushed forth for a final load of grass, took one look backward at the sun, and hid below.

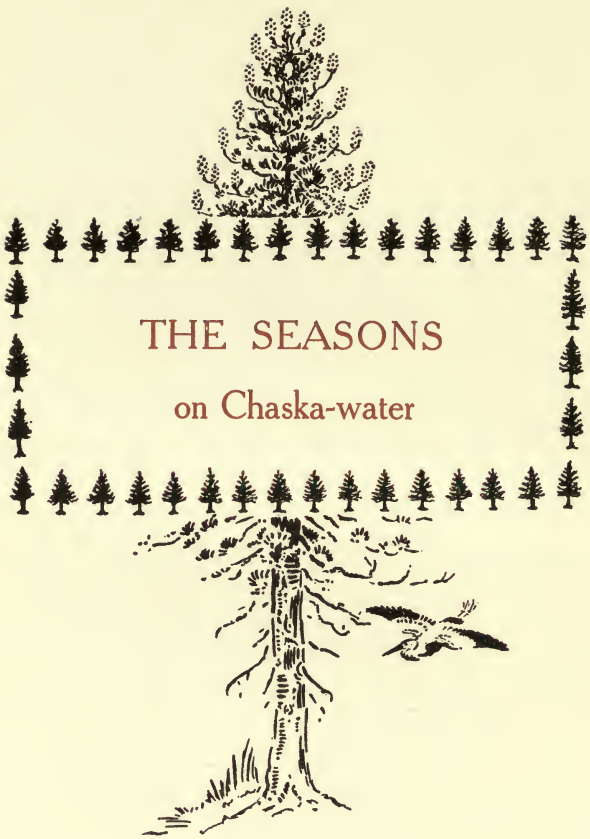
The Trumpeter Cranes, the Swans, and the Geese went sailing away to the offing.

The last Red Rose dropped her petals five—the last of the race of the prairie.

Still Ninna-bo-jou sat a-smoking. Over the tree-tops circled the smoke,—for calm and bright and warm was the weather,—over the hills and the lake, till the landscape

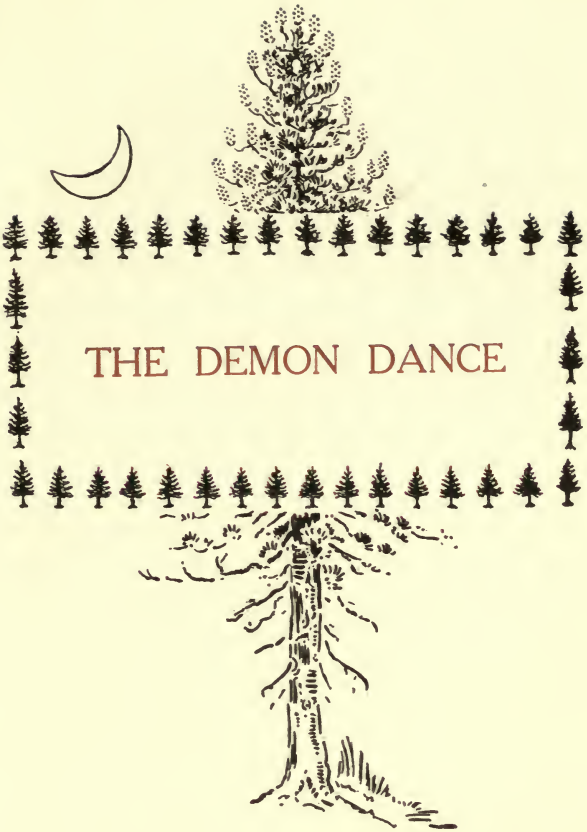
was veiled in a haze. A mystical haze and a splendor, a dreamy calm, was over all, for this was the Peace of the Smoking-days. This was the Indian Summer.

For ten fair days the Peace was smoked. The Fliers had gone and the Dwellers made ready. Then Ninna-bo-jou arose, and departing, he shook the ash from his pipe. A rising wind drifted its whiteness over the hills, blew all the smoke from the landscape. Now another feeling spreads abroad. The moon of the Falling leaves has waned, the Mad moon comes, awesome and chilling and dark. At morn there are spears of white on the ponds, there are tracks and signs—the signs of an on-coming enemy, of a foe irresistible. For this is the death of the Red Rose days; this is the dawn of the Mad moon gloom. This is the end of the joy and the light—the coming of Kabibonokka.



THE SEASONS

on Chaska-water



THE DEMON DANCE

THE DEMON DANCE ON CHASKA-WATER

LUE in its tawny hills is Chaska-water. Black are the spruce-trees that raise their spires on its banks. Ducks and Gulls in myriads are here, and the shallows are dotted with Rat-houses. The Loon and the Grebe find harvest in its darker reaches. The Blue Heron and the Rail stalk and skulk on its sedgy margin. Fish swarm in its depths, Deer and Rabbits on its banks, Birds in its trees abound. For Chaska-water, rippling bright or darkling blue, is a summer home of the Sun-god. Ninna-bo-jou is its guardian and its indwellers are his special care. All through the summer he taught them and led them—

showed them the way of their living, taught them the rights of the hunter; all through the autumn he led them.

Then came the cold.

Down from the north it came riding—riding with wicked old Peboan; and the Red Linnets swept before it like sparks in the van of a prairie fire, and the White Owl followed after like ash in the wake of a prairie fire.

Down from the sky there fell a white blanket, the Sun-god's blanket, and Nin-na-bo-jou cried: "Now I sleep. Let all my creatures sleep and be at peace, even as Chaska-water sleeps."

The Ducks and Geese flew far to the south, the Woodchuck went to his couch, the Bear and the Snake and the Bullfrog, the Tree-bugs, slept; and the blanket covered them all.

But some were rebellious.

The Partridge safe under the snow, the Hare safe under the brush, and the Muskrat safe under the ice, said: "Why should we fear old Peboan?" Then the Marten and the Fox and the Mink said: "While the Partridge and the Hare and the Muskrat are stirring abroad, we will not fail to hunt them." So they all broke the truce of the Sun-god, war-waging when peace was established.

But they reckoned not with the Ice-demons, the sons of the Lake and the Winter, whose kingdom they now were invading, and vengeance was hot on their warring.

The sun sank lower each day; the North Wind reigned, and the Ice-demons, born of the Lake and the Winter, grew bigger and stronger, and nightly danced, in the air and on the ice.

Deep in the darkest part of the dark month, in the Moon of the darkest days, they met in their wildest revel; for this was their season of sovereignty. Then did they hold their war-dance on the ice of the Chaska-water, dancing in air like flashes of rosy lightning — in a great circle they danced. And they shot their shining deadly arrows in the air, frost-arrows that pierced all things like a death; they pounded the ice with their war-clubs as they danced, and set the snow a-swirling louder, harder, faster.

There were sounds in the air of going, sounds in the earth of grinding, and of groaning in Chaska-water.

"I am not afraid," said the Partridge, as fear filled her breast: "I can hide in the kindly snow-drift." "I have no fear," said the trembling Marten: "my home is a hol-

low, immovable oak." "What care I?" cried the unhappy Muskrat: "for the thick ice of Chaska-water is my roof-guard."

Faster danced the Demons, louder they sang in their war-dance; glinting, their arrows flew, splitting, impaling, glancing.

Fear was over the lake, was over the woods.

The Mink forgot to slay the Muskrat, and, terror-tamed, groveled beside him. The Fox left the Partridge unharmed, and the Lynx and the Rabbit were brothers. Tamed by the Fear were they who had scoffed at the Peace of the Sun-god, and trembling they hid in the snow-drift, in the tree-trunk, in the ice—trembling, but inly defiant.

Whoop! went the Ice-demons, dancing louder and higher. A mile in the air went their hurtling spears.

Wah! whoop! crack! and they pounded the ice.

Wah! hy-ya! louder and faster, with war-arrows glancing, they whirled in the war-dance, *Wah! hy-ya!* and snow-drifts went curling like smoke, betraying the Partridge and Rabbit.

Flash! went the frost-arrows and pierced them.

WHOOP! hy-ya! crack! poom! rang the Ice-demons' clubs, and the oak-tree was riven asunder. Bared were the Marten, the Fisher.

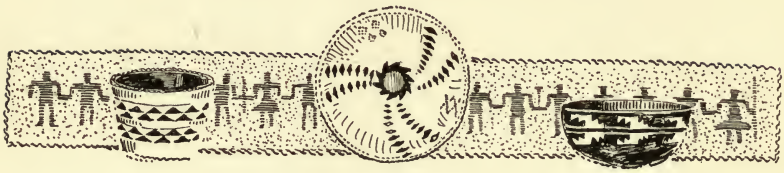
Flash! ping! and the frost-arrows pierced them.

Whoop! clang! on the ice they circled, and louder, still louder. *Poom whoooop!* and the ice-field was riven; from margin to margin the frost-crack went skirling.

Wah! baim! and it zigzagged in branches,

so the Mink and the Muskrat in hiding were thrust into view. *Ping! zip!* and the frost-arrows pierced them.

Whoop-a-hy-a! whoop-a-hy-a! round and round in swirling snow and splintered trees and riven ice, with hurtling spears and glancing shafts; up from the ice a mile on high and away, A TRAMPLING, A GLANCING, *a trampling, a glancing,* a twinkling; and fainter, a glancing, a glinting, a stillness—a stillness most awful; for this is the Peace of the Sun-god. This is the Peace in the dark of the darkest Moon. I have seen it; you may see it, away on the Chaska-water.



THE INDIAN AND THE ANGEL OF COMMERCE

THERE is a stately Angel with a marble brow and a sword that strikes straight down. There is no Angel more calm and strong or more relentless. His pathway is straight; no pity ever turned that sword—it always strikes straight down.

There be wrongs that he heeds not; there be rights that he helps not. There is no anger in his heart—only immutability, intention, directness, progression, and preterpotency.

There hath never yet been human

purpose that lasted without his aid. Imperial Rome at length forgot his power, essayed to turn his trail, and the ready sword struck down.

Small Holland, led by him, faced all the world, and England followed this calm guide to lasting power and greatness.

Napoleon prospered while his path was in the Angel's train; but when he tried to lead, and gave that mad, rebellious order to the world, the Angel struck him down.

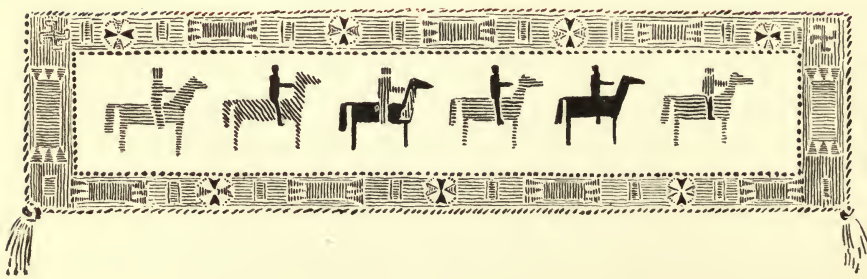
There is no problem we need fear; the future has no dread for me. Statesmen are filled with high dismay—South America, China, the Turk, the Trusts, the Negro at home, are dreadful names to men in power who have not marked the Angel's track—who have not learned the lesson that the Jew learned ages

back: that those who follow have the vanguard of his matchless power, and those who face him must go down.

"What," cried the Red-man's friends —"what shall save the Indian, with his noble lesson of simple life and unavarice?"

Nothing! He was doomed; he was dying; for he stood in the Angel's way. But we, his friends, learned wisdom. We moved him from the pathway and set him in the train of the cold, resistless one whose path is straight, and thus we saved him.

He shall not die. His lesson—of the highest in our time—shall live and grow, preserved by the awful Angel, upheld by the pitiless Angel: the one with the changeless, angerless front, and the sword that strikes straight down.



A RECIPE

When the Oak-leaf is the size of a Squirrel's foot, take a stick like a Crow's bill and make holes as big as a Coon's ear and as wide apart as Fox tracks. Then plant your corn, that it may ripen before the Chestnut splits and the Woodchuck begins his winter's sleep.

THE BIG ROUGH STATUE

THERE was once a burly, big-chested Peasant Boy who had an idea. He was full of it, mad to express it; but he did not know how. He went to a rugged mountain-side one night when his work was finished, and he saw a great crag standing out by itself. Then a plan came. He went every night and worked at this mass of living rock till he had shaped his idea in stone. It was rough and chisel-grooved, unskilfully worked, for he was no mason, but the main thought was there—the lines of a superb and colossal human form. The pose, the expression, the grandeur of the conception, were noble, as it loomed against the sky, and the message of the maker was big—big

in every part and thought. But his people would none of it. They laughed at the Rugged Boy who was unlike themselves, and he died in obscurity.

Long after, a Stranger came from a far country and discovered this great statue of living rock in its native hills. He said, "This is the work of a Giant," and he sent others to see, till all the world knew and some understood, and others wrote learnedly about the colossal masterpiece.

One day there came a Critic who was kindly disposed toward the great statue. He said it was "good, quite good," but he regretted its clumsy workmanship, its poor technic. So he set himself a life-task. He began on one of the huge rugged bumps that stood for the statue's fingers, and he filed and he polished, and

he polished and he filed, for half his lifetime, till he had carried out the exact form of the finger-tip and the nail and the wrinkles on the joint. He even suggested the grain of the skin and implanted some scattering hairs. Last of all, he painted it flesh-color and placed dirt under the nail, for he was a Realist.

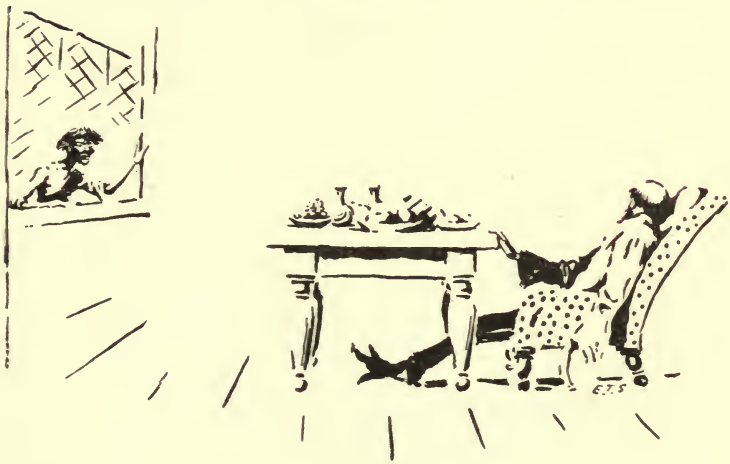
Now the people came, and when they saw how like a finger-tip the lump of stone had become and how very real the dirt was, they all fell down and worshiped. They said, "This is a great Master," and they loaded the Realist with honors and riches.

It was many years before kind nature restored the rugged surface of the colossus.

MORAL: *It 's the acid of Time that proves the gold.*

APPETITE AND FOOD

When appetite and food are given,
The two together make a heaven;
But leave out one, and, strange to tell,
The other by itself is hell.



THE FAIRY PONIES

A ROSY boy once dreamed a dream
About a Fairy Queen
Who came and promised him a wish—
The best he 'd ever seen.

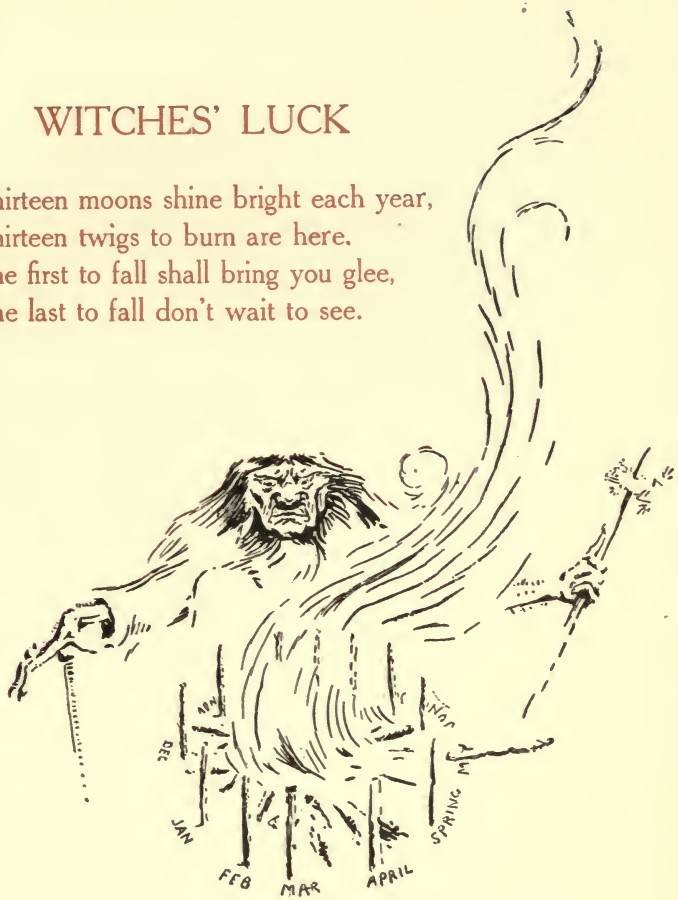
He thought of things to pet and love,
Of stuff to eat and wear;
But last cried: "Two white ponies give
To take me everywhere!"

The Fairy Queen said: "They are yours;
You 'll find them when you rise,
Each in its proper stable,
And each a living prize."

The child awoke; the vision fled.
Alas! it was so sweet!
But he found the ponies in his socks—
His own two pearly feet.

WITCHES' LUCK

Thirteen moons shine bright each year,
Thirteen twigs to burn are here.
The first to fall shall bring you glee,
The last to fall don't wait to see.



THE FABLE OF THE YANKEE CRAB

"MAMA, mama," cried the little Crab, "see, there is a fine fat Clam taking a sun-bath as wide open as can be. I must go. He is too good to lose."

"My child," said the old Crab, turning greenish, "that Clam would close with a snap and cut off both your pincers if you did but get near enough to touch him."

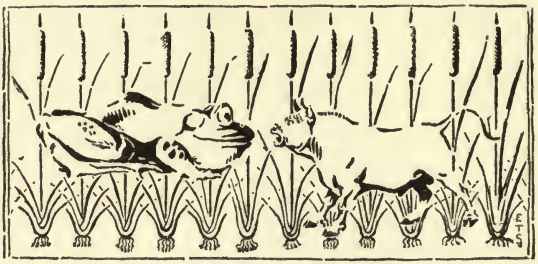
"But, mama, I should take—"

"That will do, my child; you are not to go near the dangerous monster."

But this little Crab was of Yankee stock. He had a scheme. He waited till his mother's eyes were pulled in, and then slipped softly behind the Clam that

lay spread open like a rat-trap. He had brought a large pebble, and now dropped it neatly into the open Clam, close up to the hinge. In vain then the powerful muscles tried to close the shell. The Crab found ample room to insert one pincer, and when last seen he was comfortably seated, one arm around the helpless Clam, and with the other pulling out its delicious fatness bit by bit, and cramming it into his mouth.

MORAL: *Mother does not know it all.*



THE Bullfrog fills his little throat
And bellows once again
A basso, bugling thunder-note
Across the summer fen.
A Bull might envy him that voice
And wish that it were his.
This seems to point a moral,
But I don't know what it is.

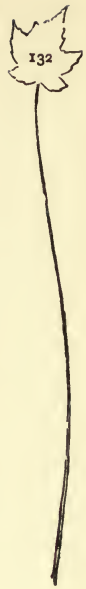
UP TO DATE

"OH, brothers, look at that fine big Culex coming to our pond!" cried Stethorynchus, a lively little Stickleback that lived in a marshy place near Yorkadelphia.

"Keep quiet, you fool!" cried Cataphractus (who, though he had but two sticklers, had a broad, intelligent forehead, and was highly respected among the Gasterosteidæ). "Can't you see she is coming to lay her eggs?"

"It is not a Culex at all, you microcephalous idiot; don't you see by the straight line of her back that that is an Anopheles? said Polyplectron, with characteristic rudeness.

"So much the better," returned Cata-



phractus. "Culex certainly lays twice as many eggs as Anopheles, but she is more suspicious."

"I never saw an Anopheles with spotted thoracic segments," whispered Pegrozila, peevishly, for he had a touch of malaria.

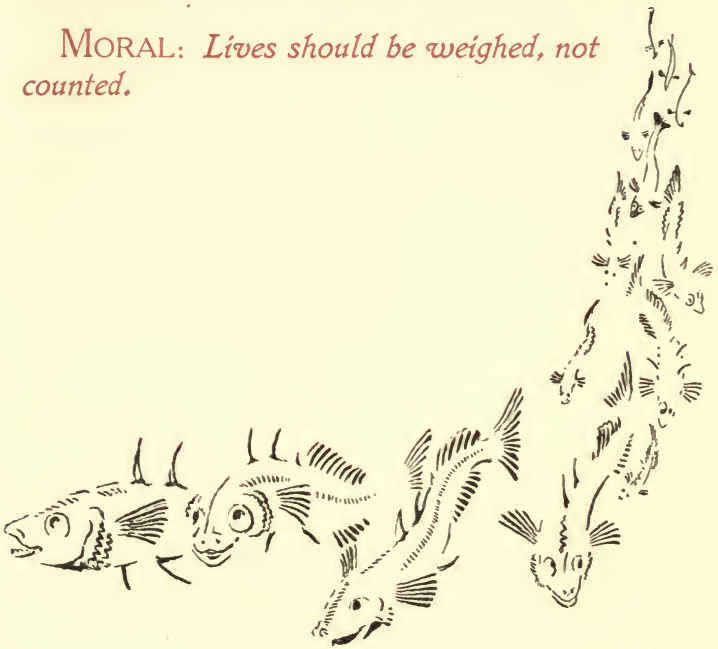
"Well, Dr. Howard has," retorted Cataphractus, with crushing sarcasm. "Hush—sh—sh—"

So each of the little Sticklebacks hid behind a grass-seed, hushed, and held his gills until the Anopheles had laid over one hundred lovely pink eggs with a sweet little baby Anopheles in each. Then, in blissful ignorance of the awful fate awaiting her beloved offspring, the Mosquito floated away with a lightsome *ping!*

The little Sticklebacks made a rush. It was who could get there first. In a trice the floating eggs were rent to pieces

and devoured. Then the seventeen little Sticklebacks fluffed their gills in glee, and for two hours afterward were full of eggs and happiness and congratulations that their pond had not been kerosened.

MORAL: *Lives should be weighed, not counted.*



THE GRASSHOPPER THAT MADE THE MISSIMO VALLEY

THE vast low Jurassic Island had been raised above the level of the sea, where now the great continent stands. A Matriarchal Dinosaur was leading her ponderous troop in single file across the upheaved marshy plain. A dry season had blighted the lower pastures and forced them to travel, and as she was about to turn northerly, a Jurassic Grasshopper said *Bizz!* under her nose. The insect is quite harmless, but it protects itself by imitating the fearful *bizz* of the ancestral Rattlesnake. The old Dinosaur wheeled to one side and raised her head. Her little twinkling eyes fell on a rank green

marsh to the eastward, and she now turned and led her troop to that. Each day they came to the feeding-ground along their first discovered trail, until it was worn deeply.

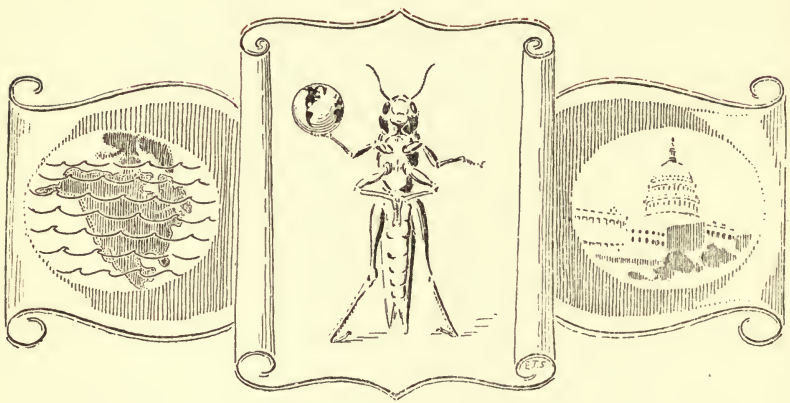
Time went by. A wet season made the upland marsh a brimming lake. It would have overflowed to the westward, for this was its lower side, but the deep-worn trail of the Dinosaurs offered an outlet that enlarged with the yearly rains faster than the slowly rising lands could tilt the other way; and so it became a stream.

Ages went by. The great upheaval went on. The Rocky Mountains arose. The former trail was now a crooked river flowing eastward, growing larger, carrying into the shallow sea millions of tons of clay, till that shallow sea became

the Missouri and Mississippi Valley, which might never have existed had the Dinosaur been allowed to follow her original course—a course that would have left these vast, turbid, land-creative waters free to seek the Western Sea: and the *bizz* of the harmless Grasshopper did it all.

MORAL:

Full oft a tranquil world hath been
Upset by meddling word, I ween.



A KNOTTY PROBLEM

"The line between business and robbery has never yet been clearly defined," said the Blue Jay, as he swallowed the egg of the Robin, who was off hunting for worms.

THE SINGLE WAY

FAR up on the Continental Divide the Mother Raincloud gave birth to two little Rills. They were close together, but had different paths. "I shall be a great River and do great things, for I believe in breadth; a hundred valleys and all the plains shall know me," said one, as he turned eastward.

"I shall be a River in one valley. You will think me narrow, but one interest is all I can attend to," said the other, as he turned westward.

So they went their divers ways. The one to the east chopped and changed its course. It ran all over the plains, each year in a new channel. It has not yet begun to scoop out a valley. It is of no

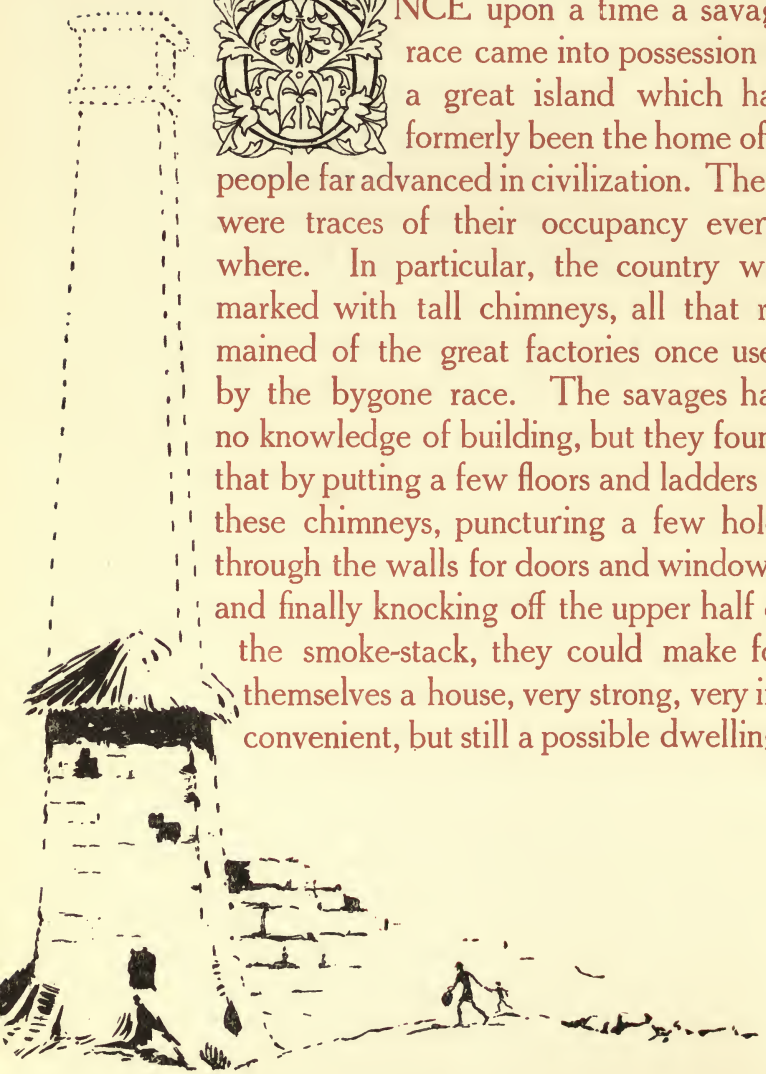
account, a scorn and reproach; its scattered waters have no power. It is not even a feature of the big landscape. Men call it the Platte.

The other, with no more water, stuck to one channel and sawed and sawed till it made the mightiest gash in all the globe; for this is the Colorado River, and the Grand Cañon is the channel it made.

MORAL: *A Bull can paw more earth than an Ant, but he leaves no monument.*

A FABLE FOR ARCHITECTS

ONCE upon a time a savage race came into possession of a great island which had formerly been the home of a people far advanced in civilization. There were traces of their occupancy everywhere. In particular, the country was marked with tall chimneys, all that remained of the great factories once used by the bygone race. The savages had no knowledge of building, but they found that by putting a few floors and ladders in these chimneys, puncturing a few holes through the walls for doors and windows, and finally knocking off the upper half of the smoke-stack, they could make for themselves a house, very strong, very inconvenient, but still a possible dwelling.



In time these savages developed a crude civilization of their own. They acquired something of the art of building, and when they set about making a new dwelling they had always for models those that had been their fathers' guides. Accordingly, each new dwelling was made as an immense factory chimney; a few holes were punctured in its sides for light and air, floors were bungled in, the upper half of the chimney was pulled down, and lo! a dwelling expensive, inconvenient, and absurd, but on the line of the "grand old classics" that had been preserved by their "innate nobleness and hallowed by tradition."

This fable is especially commended to those architects who try to turn everything into a Greek temple.

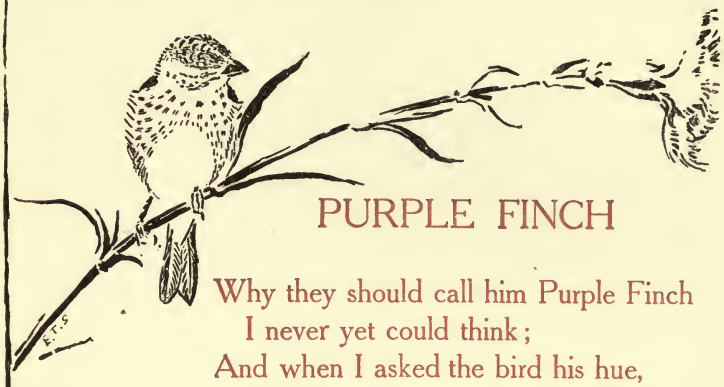
THE FEATHER AND THE FRUMP

A TRAGEDY

The Dames of Mode no longer wear
The plumes they used to prize;
They find that Egrets in the hair
Bring crow's-feet to the eyes.

FAMILIAR SAYINGS

Pa Porky: "It hurts me far more than it hurts you."



PURPLE FINCH

Why they should call him Purple Finch
I never yet could think;
And when I asked the bird his hue,
He clearly answered, "Pink."

VEERY AND SOLOMON'S SEAL

THE wise men say each growing thing in nature has a sound:
But for our dullness, we might hear sweet music all around;
I mean not simply birds and rills, but trees, flowers, mosses, too,
Are making music exquisite as is their form and hue.
So when you see the lily's seal with all its chime of bells,
Think you how sweet must be the peal their little tinkle tells.
Our dull ears miss the strains, but here is one to make them reach us,
With finer ears and silver throat, the lily chime to teach us.
The Veery in the self-same shade translates the lily's ringing,
"*Ah, weary, weary, weary rest,*" both thrush and bush are singing.

THE FRETFUL PORCUPINE

In the woods of Poconic there once roamed a very discontented Porcupine. He was forever fretting. He complained that everything was wrong, till it was perfectly scandalous, and the Great Spirit, getting tired of his grumbling, said:

"You and the world I have made don't seem to fit. One or the other must be wrong. It is easier to change you. You don't like the trees, you are unhappy on the ground and think everything is upside down, so I 'll turn you inside out and put you in the water."

This was the origin of the Shad.

HOW THE CHESTNUT BURRS BECAME

AFTER Manitou had turned the old Porcupine into a Shad the young ones missed their mother and crawled up into a high tree to look for her coming. Manitou happened to pass that way, and they all chattered their teeth at him, thinking themselves safe. They were not wicked, only ill-trained; some of them, indeed, were at heart quite good, but, oh, so ill-trained, and they chattered and groaned as Manitou came nearer. Remembering then that he had taken their mother from them, he said: "You look very well up there, you little Porkys, so you had better stay there for always, and be part of the tree."

This was the origin of the chestnut burrs. They hang like a lot of little porcupines on the tree-crotches. They are spiny and dangerous, utterly without manners, and yet most of them have a good little heart inside.

AN EXPLANATION

THE Meddy she wuz sorry
For her sister Sky, ye see,
Coz, though her robe of blue wuz bright,
'T was plain as it could be.

An' so she sent a skylark up
To trim the Sky robe right
Wi' daisies from the Meddy
(Ye kin see them best at night).

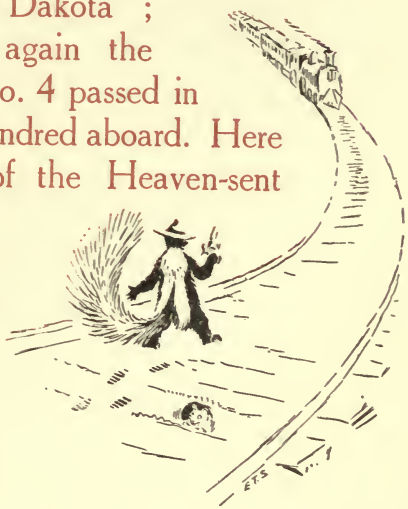
An' every scrap of blue cut out
To make them daisies set
Come tum'ling down upon the grass
An' growed a violet.

THE HEAVEN-SENT SKUNK

The Skunk is a beast that hath neither strength nor speed for his safety, but a most devilish smell, so that no creature will wittingly imperil himself with the Skunk, and he, knowing the same, feareth nothing and fleeth from none. Thus it came about that the Skunk, being on the track in the forefront of the express-engine, fled not, but trusted in his great strength, and thenceforth No. 4 was known throughout all that country.

Now it so fell out that the hireling at the station received word of No. 14 approaching, which also should be switched, and he so ordered it. And while he yet tarried, there arose a great west wind, and

he sniffed with his nostrils, and said: "The tidings that came were of No. 14, which should be switched; but the smell is like unto No. 4, which also cometh from the west and tarrieth not, but passeth like a whirlwind of Dakota"; and he changed again the switches, so that No. 4 passed in safety with three hundred aboard. Here endeth the tale of the Heaven-sent Skunk.



MORAL: *See next Fable.*

THE DOINGS OF A LITTLE FIB

"WHY, O Sequibonosa, do the Canoe-Birch and the Balsam grow not together like good neighbors, and why does the lightning pass them by to strike the Oak and the Ash?"

"Well found, my little Sha-ka-skanda-wayo! Now I know you have the eye of the hunter, for you have seen a truth. Listen, and I will tell you of the ancient things that made it so."

Here, then, is his tale done into modern English, in case there should be some who do not speak Ojibway.

Long ago a little idle Rumor was flitting from tree to tree in the woods of Shebandowan. He had nothing to do but to preen his wings and move his ears,

which were very long. Though idle, he was yet a busybody, which often happens. He had just peeped into the nest of the Skandal-bird to see if any young were hatched; but it was empty, so he sat yawning. Just then the Star-girl came tumbling down from the sky to be the first of the Red Race. She came, not like an arrow, head first, nor like a Duck, feet first, but skating and sliding this way and back, like a big Basswood leaf, till she dropped on a mossy bank, and there she sat very still, holding her little finger where a Berry-brier had scratched it, and gazing through her black hair, back to the sky, with a sad and wistful look.

When the little Rumor asked her whence she came, she made no answer, but gazed up at the sky, and a tear stood in her eye.

The little Rumor was quite touched by her silent sorrow. He was easily touched, though never deeply, and he flew off to tell somebody, anybody, how deep his feelings were.

He had scarcely taken wing when the Birch-tree whispered, "What news, what news, little Tittle-tattle?"

"Oh, such a sad case!" answered the Rumor, and his long tongue shot out like a snake's. "A beautiful child of the stars has fallen down here and sits now silent, dumb with sorrow, on a bank, and her finger is bleeding frightfully."

"What, all about a scratched finger? She must be seriously hurt, probably wounded elsewhere."

"Yes, that 's so; it *did* seem more serious than a scratched finger. I dare say she has many wounds."

"Oh, this is most interesting!" said the Birch, as the Rumor prepared to flit. "Won't you have some refreshment? You 'll find a lot of half-ripe facts on my lower branches, and under those fallen leaves are heaps of juicy innuendos."

And as the Rumor was enjoying his favorite food, the Balsam called, "What news, what news, Batwing?"

He answered the Balsam, "Oh, such a sad case! A beautiful maiden covered with wounds and weeping her eyes out."

"Oh, dear! Has she no friends?"

But the Rumor swallowed a couple of the green facts, and flew off mumbling an innuendo.

The sun was down now, and when the Rumor came back to the Star-girl she was sitting cold and miserable on the bank.

"Would that I had a red light from that star; then should I be warm again," was all she said in answer to the Rumor, and away went the Winged One zigzag, —he never flew straight,— but the Birch-tree caught sight of him and called:

"Ho, Little Long-tongue, what news?"

"Starving and freezing, she, the Star-girl, nearly frozen, crying for red star-light."

"Ah, poor thing!" said the Balsam. "I will give her two of my limbs, which will make the red starlight if she sings the wind-song and rubs them as the wind rubs. I know, for I am a Medi-cine-tree."

"Little use your red starlight would be," sneered the Birch, for she was not

friendly with the Balsam and felt that hers was the claim of "first finder." "I 'll give her the magic fringe of my robe, which will magnify the starlight into sunlight."

"Pah! Her fringe, a mere puff of dust! If she wants warmth, let her add a few of my cone-jewels to the red light, then she 'll see sparkling blazes."

So away went the Rumor to the Star-girl.

She rubbed the Balsam sticks till a little red star came forth, then she put in the Birch fringe, and it blazed; she added the Balsam cones, and had a warm fire.

"But the wind was cold on her back, and her wound was sore" — so the little Rumor told the Balsam and the Birch in

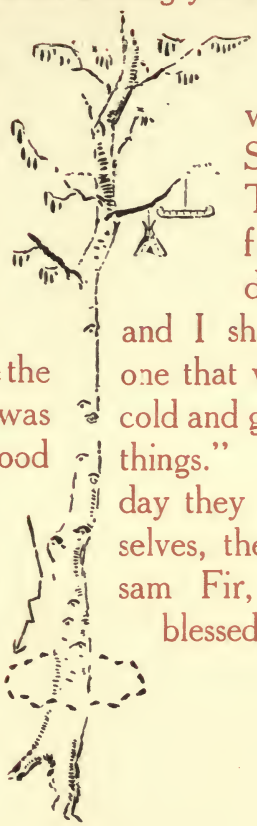
the morning. The first gave her Balsam for her wounds, and the Birch gave her a robe to make a wigwam.

"Take my boughs to make her a soft bed," said the Balsam, in triumph.

"I will give her also dishes and sugar and a canoe to ride in, as well as a home. I will wear a white robe, so she can find me in the woods in summer, and in winter I will hang my boughs with beads of brown wampum," said the Birch.

And before the Balsam could think of anything else to say the Ru-

mor went zigzag through the woods to the Star-girl. But he was a little liar; his tongue was forked and his flight was crooked. He could not tell the truth, so he said, "See what I bring you from my grandmother."



"Tell your good grandmother, whoever she is," said the Star-girl, "I thank her. There is little I can do further, but the Thunder-bird is my brother, and I shall beg him not to strike the one that warmed me when I was cold and gave me so many good things."

So to this day they dispute between themselves, the Birch and the Balsam Fir, as to which is the blessed tree of

the Star-girl; their descendants still give the race of the Star-girl their ancient gifts: the Balsam sticks that the Indian uses to start his rubbing-stick fire, the shreds of Birch bark that make the best of tinder, the bed of Balsam boughs and the healing Balsam gum, the Birch-bark wigwam and canoe. And the Thunder-bird, not knowing which to strike, lets both alone. The Pine, the Oak, and the Ash he splinters in every storm, but the Birch and the Balsam stand unharmed; they never have been struck.

How do I know these things, O Shaka-skanda-wayo? Verily, I have them on authority you will scarcely deny—the same being the source of nearly all history. Behold, I got them from a little idle Rumor.

MORAL: *The Great Spirit can draw a straight line with a crooked stick.*

THE WENDIGO

WINTER DEATH

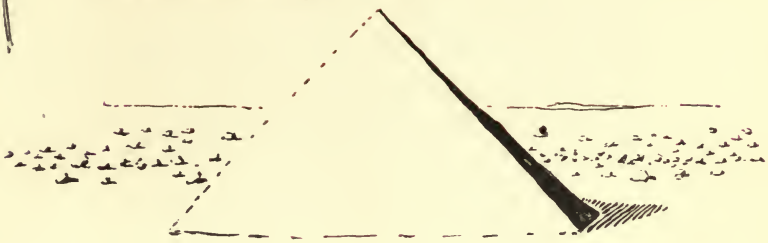
THROUGH the pine woods of Keewaydin,
Over the snows of Shebandowan,
The Wendigo roams in the winter's frost
And pursues to destruction the hunter.
Yet no man can meet with the Wendigo,
No man can face him or see him;
Only his track in the snow is seen,
And lost is the hunter that sees it.
For, early or late, ere the change of the moon,
His place in the wigwam is empty,
And none ever knows where he goeth,
Only this — that he had the weird warning,
The huge human track in the deep-lying snow
Leading on when the pathway was hidden;
And this — that his wigwam is empty.
But no man will speak of the demon;
The heart that ne'er quailed on the war-path
Turns to stone at the name of the Wendigo.

THE SAVING WARMTH

A PARTY of Northern explorers were lost and dying of cold, when they came on an Indian camp-ground that had been abandoned shortly before. These Indians had scattered the remaining brands of their fire. Each shivering explorer now sat down to warm himself at the particular brand he had secured, because they were of the true faith—they believed in the individual and in decentralization. But in spite of their shivering efforts the brands were dying and the men likely to do the same, when one man who had not been trained in any school of political economy, but was willing to stand by results, persuaded them to pile all their brands in one spot. The result was a

good fire and salvation for the party; though some of them continued to the end of their days to denounce that man as an idiot and the principle as dangerous.

MORAL: *The Sun would die in a day if scattered enough.*



THE MYTH OF THE SONG-SPARROW

HIS mother was the Brook and his sisters were the Reeds,
And every one applauded when he sang about his deeds.
His vest was white, his mantle brown, as clear as they could be,
And his songs were fairly bubbling o'er with melody and glee.
But an envious Neighbor splashed with mud our Brownie's coat and vest,
And then a final handful threw that stuck upon his breast.
The Brook-bird's mother did her best to wash the stains away;
But there they stuck, and, as it seems, are very like to stay.
And so he wears the splashes and the mud blotch, as you see;
But his songs are bubbling over still with melody and glee.

BROOK BROWNIE

THE PACK-RAT

WAY in the mountain region of the West is a little animal called a Pack-rat. "Pack" is Rocky Mountain for "carry," and this Rat obtains its name on account of its mania for carrying off to its hole any odd or striking object that may fall in its path.

Each Pack-rat's home is in the middle of a vast accumulation of useless odds and ends, such as pine-cones, white pebbles, and bones and skulls of small animals. Even crabs' claws from remote waters find their way to the pile, and cast-off snake-skins are esteemed particularly precious. If a hunters' camp is near by, the Pack-rat often finds opportunity

for securing specimens of leather straps, old cartridges, tobacco stamps, pipes, etc., which it steals when the men are asleep. None of the objects, of course, is of the slightest use to the animal. Simply he likes them. He goes on adding to his heap of rubbish till it is perhaps four or five feet high and eight or ten feet across. There on the top, in sunny weather, sits the diminutive collector,—not so large as a House-rat,—gloating over his possessions. He turns them over so that the sun will strike them better, and enjoys them, but worries his little life out night and day lest some other Rat should steal from his pile.

The larger the pile, the more pleasure and the more worry he finds in it, for it lets all the world of enemies know just

where he lives, and often draws on him the vengeance of hunters whose valuables he has pilfered.

Also, the country he lives in is subject to both fire and flood, and on the approach of either destructive element the poor Pack-rat is in a terrible state. He wishes to move his treasures, and tries to secure the help of his neighbors; all, however, are busily engaged with their bibelots. He rushes frantically about, endeavoring to take to some place of safety his rarest acquisitions—that door-knob which he was three long nights in carrying from the ranch-house, that piece of green soap, or that set of false teeth stolen from the passing picnic party; then he is horrified at the idea of leaving these valuables while he returns for more. Finally he becomes so bewildered by terror

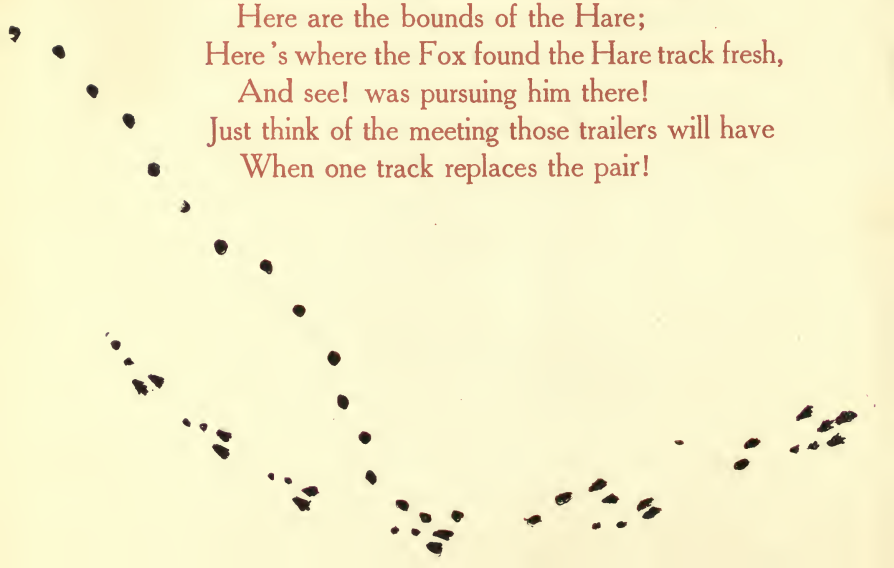
for himself and anxiety for his museum that he carries back the treasures which he has removed, and, accidentally, perhaps, perishes with them, while the common, sordid Rats of the neighborhood, with no property but the fur on their backs, and with no ideas beyond the getting of a living, escape without difficulty to a place of safety.

MORAL: *Enough is wealth, more is disease.*

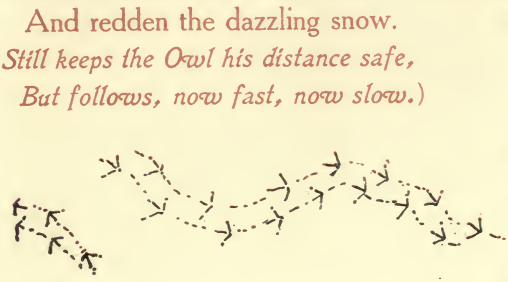
THE HUNTERS

THE White Owl sits on a low snow-drift,
Away from the Hunter's hounds,
And longs and waits for the latch to lift
When the Trapper shall go his rounds.

O'er the rolling prairie see him run,
As he reads on the snow-page fair:
Here is the neat, straight trail of the Fox;
Here are the bounds of the Hare;
Here 's where the Fox found the Hare track fresh,
And see! was pursuing him there!
Just think of the meeting those trailers will have
When one track replaces the pair!



Now here are the chains of the Grouse's trail;
They turn and they wind about;
And the Hunter crawls till the flock is sprung
And whirs from a snow-drift out,
Save two, which fall at the roar of the gun
And redden the dazzling snow.
(*Still keeps the Owl his distance safe,*
But follows, now fast, now slow.)



And here was the place of a poisoned bait,
Where naught but its print now lies,
For a Wolf has traced it up the wind
And swallowed the tempting prize.
Here 't was griping his vitals and choking his breath—
That wolfskin is taken at last!
See! but a few steps, then he staggered and fell,
And writhed as his life went fast.

There he arose and he struggled anew,
And staggered again?—but no!
The strength that is born of his wild, free life
Has conquered this deadly foe;
And the steps of the Wolf grow steady and strong
Till he 's spurning the prairie again.
(*Still the White Owl, following far behind,*
Winnows low o'er the distant plain.)

Now this is the place of another bait,
With Fox tracks here and there:
Both bait and Fox are gone, and the tracks
The power of the poison declare.
Still he follows and scans as he onward runs;
But see! by the bushes ahead
There 's a yellow fur—'t is the Fox himself:
In the snow he lies stark and dead!

(*From a neighboring tree, the Owl's great eyes*
Take in the scene below;
And he bides till the carrion furless lies,
And waits till the Hunter takes up his prize
And takes up his gun to go.
This is the chance that the Owl foresaw
When he followed afar on the snow.)

THE GREAT STAG

THE GREAT STAG[1]

WE all know him well; his existence is established now as surely as that of the sea-serpent or the big fish that got off the hook—even better, for many of us have seen him in broad daylight and had a fair open view of his noble form. And what a creature he is, what a paragon of size and development! One observer, who had an exceptionally good look at him, counted twenty-seven tines on each antler. And such antlers! absolutely symmetrical and perfect, in every way befitting his immense stature and noble beauty. I am sure it cannot be that he shed them above once in twenty years, if at all. Another equally reliable historian asserts

[1] Copyright, 1891, by Forest and Stream Publishing Company.

that this woodland Kraken has three antlers, the third a spike in the center. So far all is abundantly attested, but I must say that I place but little faith in that story of a chaplet of pearls about his brow; it is simply the knotted bead-like antler-burrs, white and polished, and glistening perhaps with the morning dew; while the crucifix in the middle, that has been reported, is nothing more than the spike-horn above referred to.

I expect to learn some day that he casts no shadow, for this I certainly know, that oftentimes he leaves no track behind him in the snow. His speed, too, is marvelous; it is as the wind. He seems—nay, he actually *is*—ubiquitous. Why! I first met him in the woods of Ontario; then, shortly afterward, I encountered his scornful gaze amid the sand-hills of

Manitoba. I have heard for certain of his having been seen in the cane-brakes of Kentucky and amid the valleys of California. Even in England he was well known till quite lately, and bore the name of "The White Hart Royal," and in Scotland he is still famous as "The Muckle Hart of Ben More." Nay, more than all this, St. Hubert himself was blessed with a sight of the tri-cerate head, in the forests of Germany, and he, in fact, is responsible for that story of the central crucifix. The great Münchhausen, too, has much to say about this noblest of deer, and what need have we of further witness?

But it matters little where he dwells; no human hand has ever touched his glossy coat. He seems endowed with a charmed life; no bullet cast of lead can ever reach him. Of course a ball of sil-

ver might; I have never tried that, and I do not remember that any Crœsus ever went about riddling innumerable bushes with costly projectiles in hopes of securing the Great Stag. I doubt, too, that he would have succeeded; indeed, I feel sure that no hunter armed with such infallible missiles will ever meet with St. Hubert's Hart. He is too sagacious to allow it, or, if he did, he would not long remain in sight; he would simply show himself and snort and stamp—I know it, for I have watched him—then fade away, like the Cat in Wonderland, the scornful gaze being the last thing to vanish into thin air. He leaves a good track for a little while, but this, too, fades away completely. Once I followed it for miles, but it disappeared at last in a thickly grown bottom-land, and no doubt the phantom buck himself had vanished

at the selfsame place. An Indian who was hunting with me thought otherwise, and persisted in circling off in another direction, so that we parted; but he was a fool, and when after two or three hours he came again to camp, bringing with him an ordinary buck, I could not but smile to see how completely he had been baffled.

It has never been decided even of what species he is; some testimony points one way and some in another. For my own part, I do not believe that he is a species at all, but a genus—genus *Cervus;* nothing more. One recent writer, however, claims that this was an elk, and was known for long in Pennsylvania as "The Lone Elk of the Sinnamahoning," in which valley he was killed in 1867. But that, of course, is all nonsense. No, no! I know too much about him to believe any such tale. You cannot wreck

the Flying Dutchman; he still will sail under great billowy clouds of canvas, till the last trump blows and the Kraken lashes all the sea to foam, and, belly upward, floats to show the end has come.

No, no! Still he roams and bounds from hill to hill, as I have seen and yet may see again — yea, even now do see in fancy's eye along my glistening rifle-barrel. Again I see that glorious head against the sky, as often I did — more often in early days than now, for he appears most often to the tyro in the woods — see him give one great bound when cracks the ready rifle, and know from the miraculous way in which the unerring ball was turned aside that this was indeed the Mighty Stag again, the Spirit of the Race, and that no bullet cast of lead can ever graze his hide — and again he fades away.

Long may he roam and spurn the hill-tops with his flying feet and dash the dew-drops from the highest pine-tops as he clears the valley at a bound; long may he live and tempt a hail of harmless lead. But the rattle of repeaters is heard in every valley now; the wise are more and more often propounding that unfathomable riddle, "Where have all the Deer gone?" and when at length the last remainder of the common race is slain, I know too well that this, the immortal, too will die; that though he never can be touched by death, he yet will perish—perish like the last surviving Cambrian bard, not by the hand of man, but by a strange engulfment so complete that not a trace of him will e'er be seen again and but a fading memory of his ever having been.

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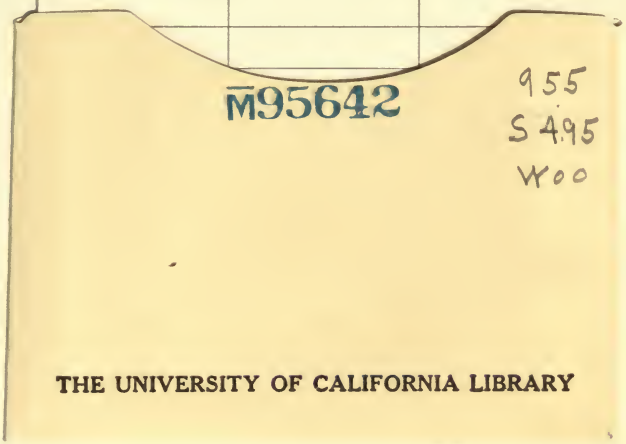
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